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£1.40

PRIVATE EYE

LIVE 8 SPECIAL!

GOLDEN OLDIES



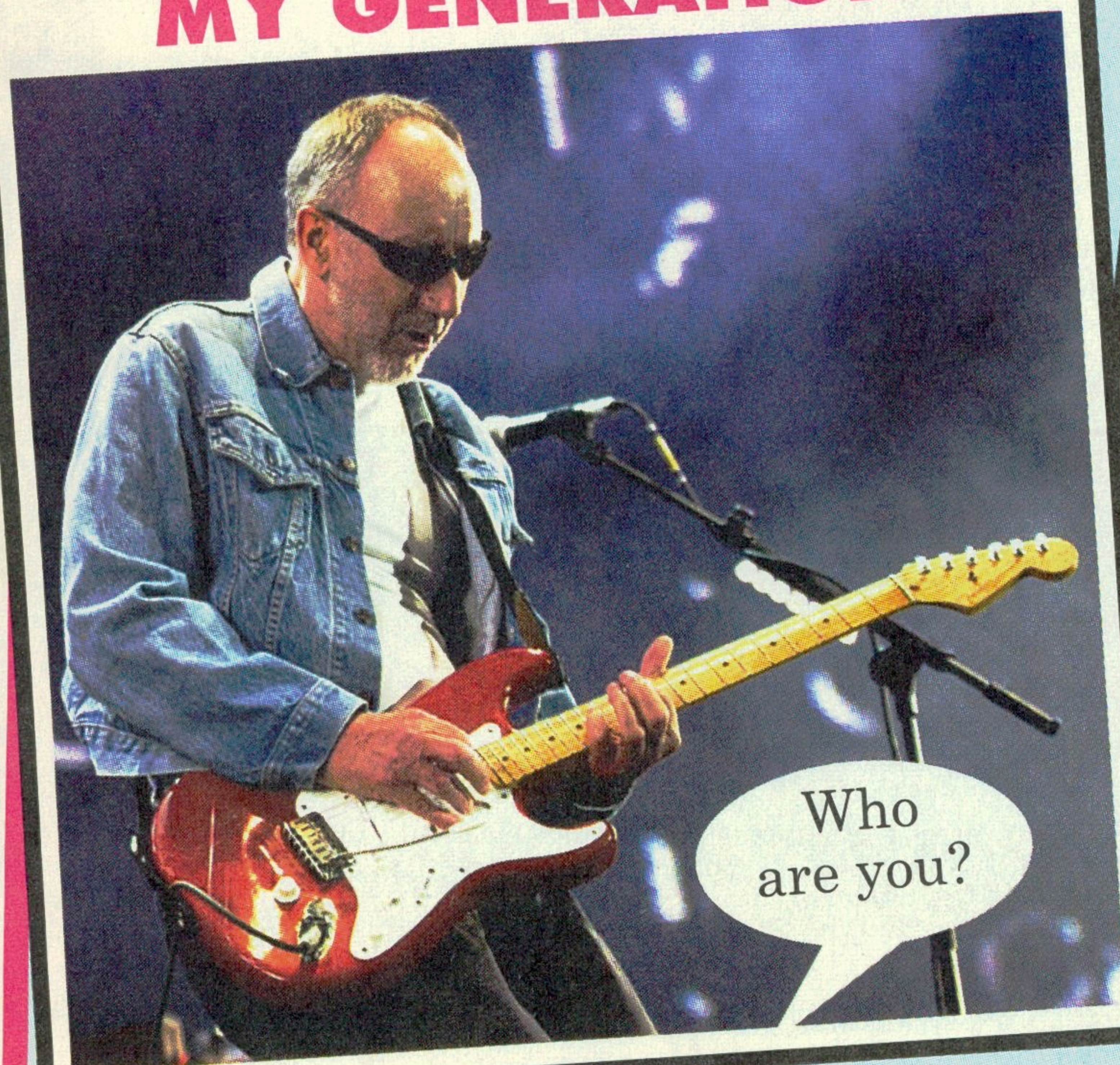
I said you
should get a
new hearing
aid

MADONNA AND CHILD



It must be
really exciting for
you to meet me

MY GENERATION



Who
are you?

MAKE DOHERTY HISTORY



Do you know
the importance
of debt relief?

No – but you
play it and I'll
sing along badly

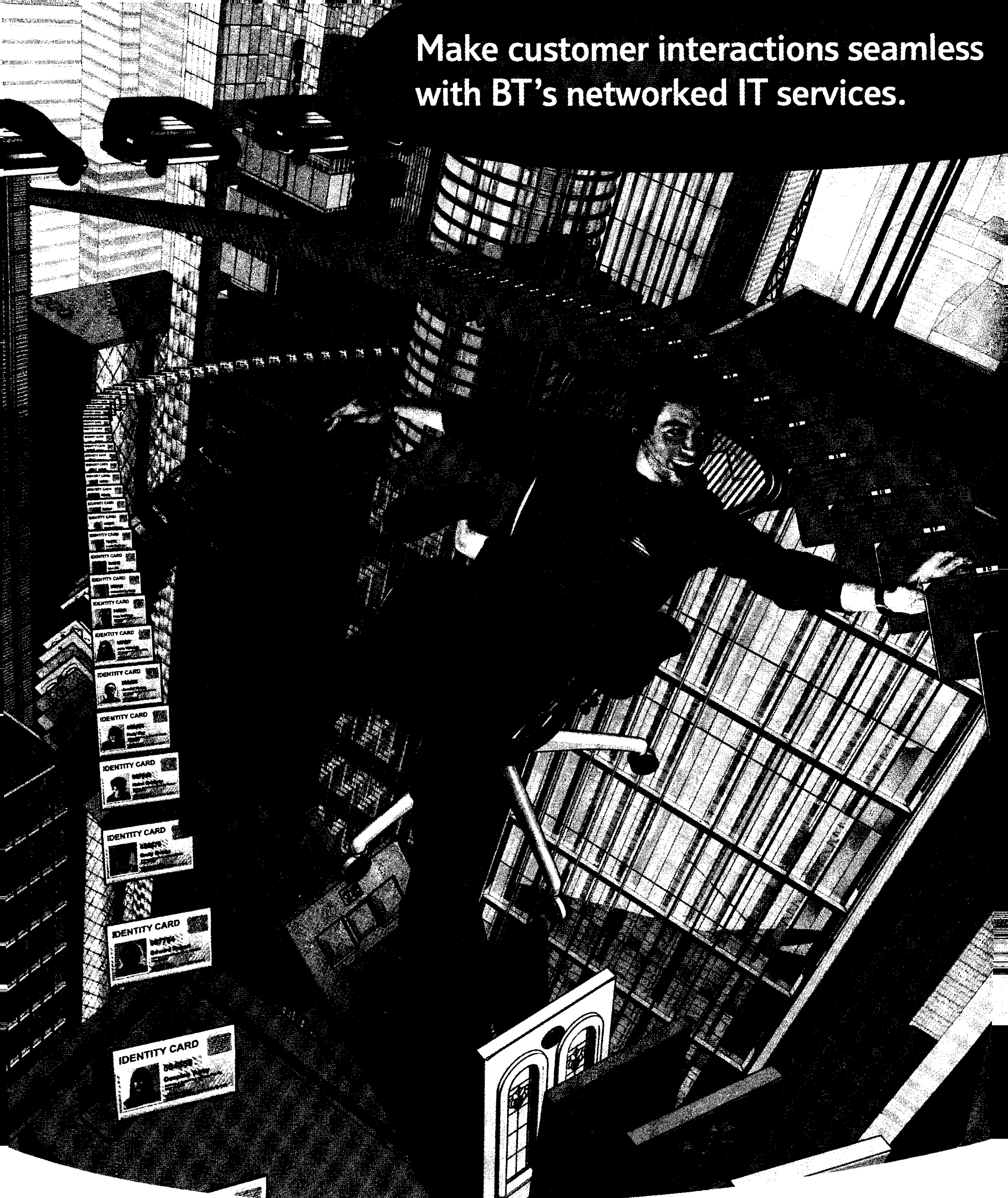
TAKES
YOU MILES AWAY
IN SECONDS.



Model shown GS 430 with metallic paint. GS 430 £47,130 OTR. GS range prices start from £30,400 to £47,130 OTR. Prices correct at time of going to press and include VAT, delivery charges, number plates, full tank of fuel, one year's road fund licence and first registration fee. JD Power and Associates 2001-2005 UK Customer Satisfaction Studies™ 2005 study based on a total of 23,322 responses from owners of two-year-old vehicles. www.jdpower.com



30 Fuel economy figures: extra-urban 8.6 L/100km (32.8 mpg), urban 16.3 L/100km (17.3 mpg), combined 11.4 L/100km (24.8 mpg). CO₂ emissions 269g/km.



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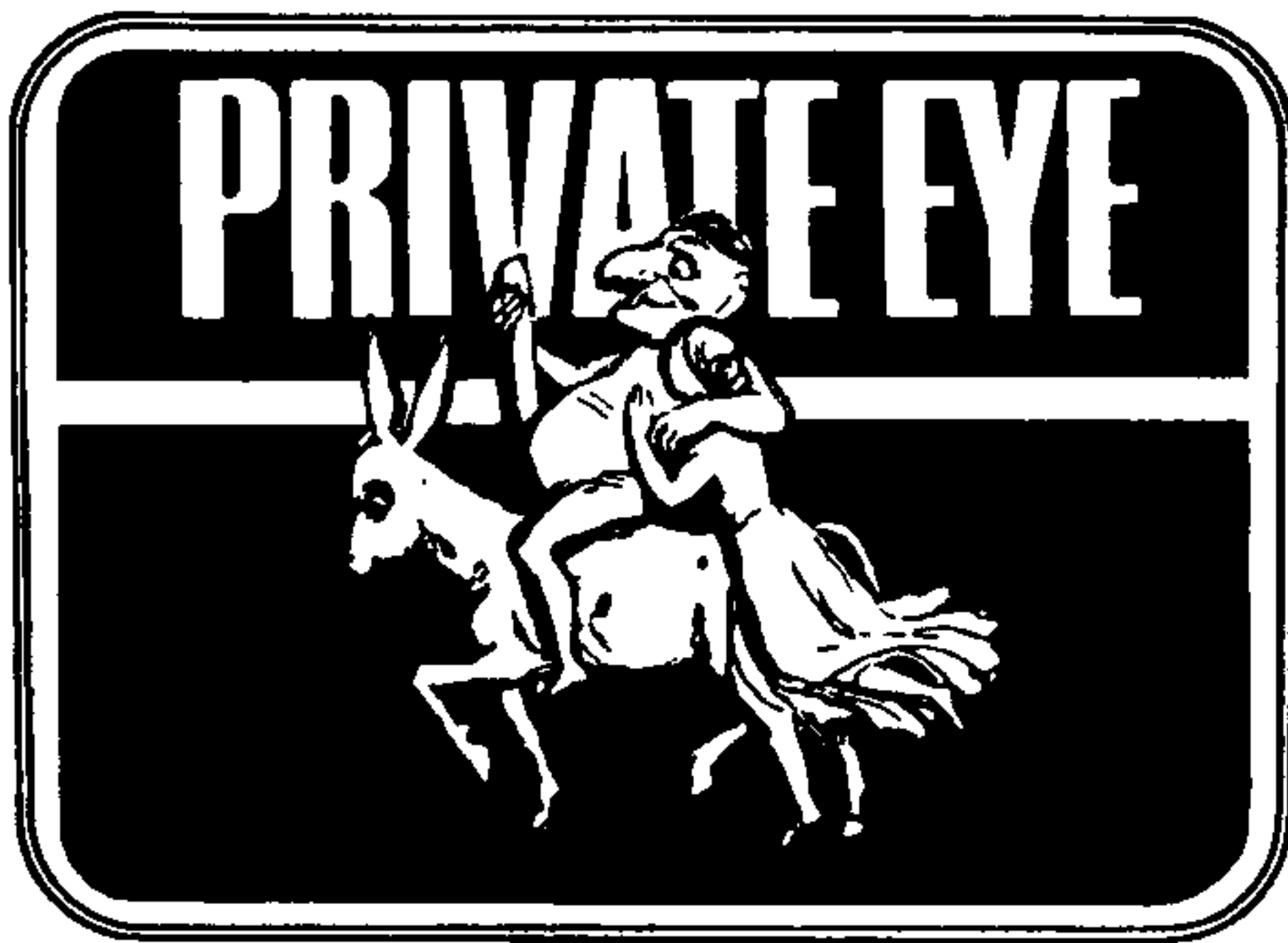
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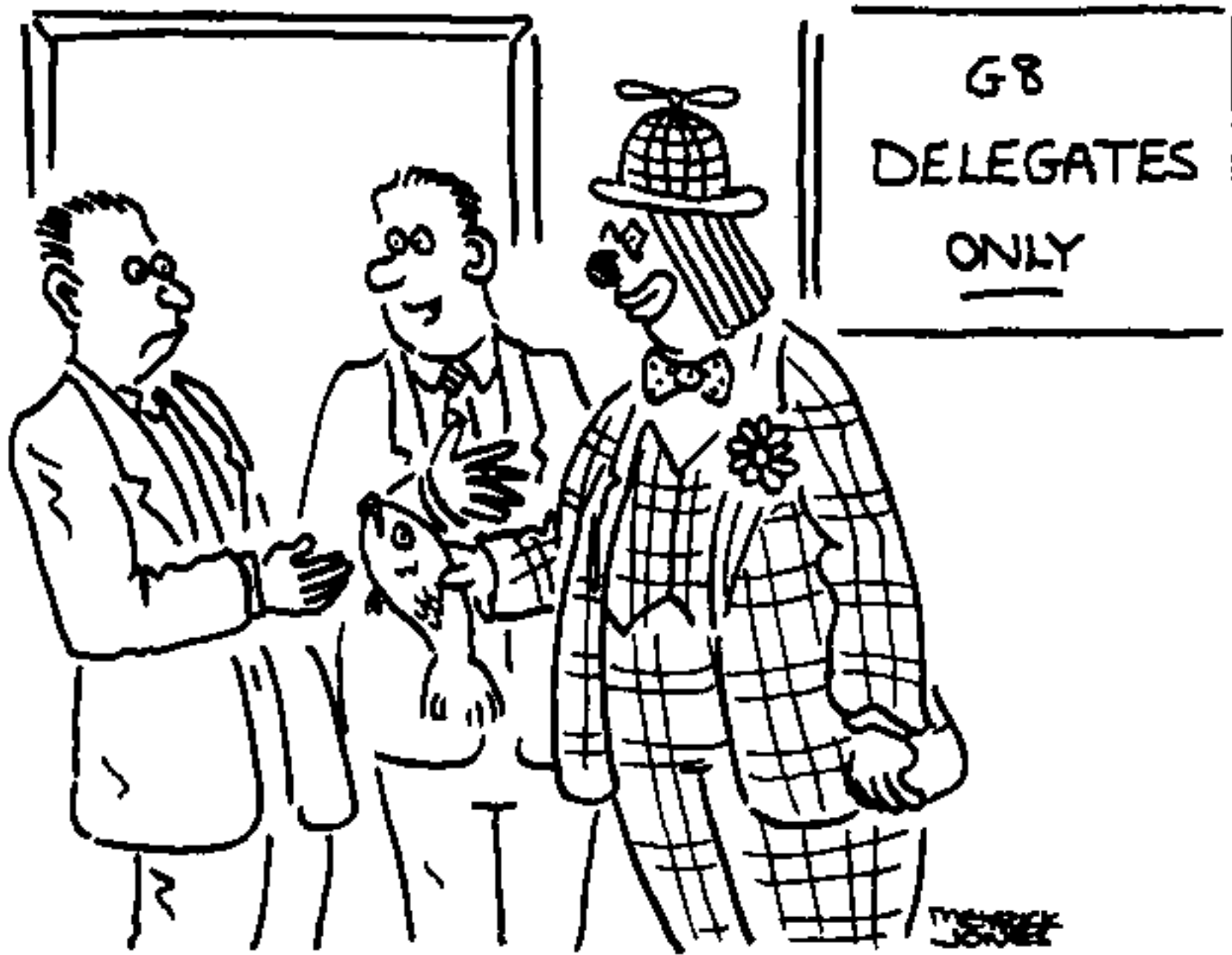
ASSURANCES from the BBC's presenting team and every artist who was asked by a cynical hack that Live 8 was all about the message, not the album sales, have cut little ice with bosses in the music industry who recall the 21 percent jump in record sales following the original Live Aid in 1985.

HMV and Virgin were quick to add special "Live 8" sections to their online stores, generously offering shoppers a chance to "Find All The Biggest Acts To Take The Stage At The Biggest And Most Important Event Of The Decade"; while ad breaks in the two days following the concert were filled with plugs for CDs from the back catalogue of those on the bill – an unusual event in an industry that rarely pays out for TV spots more than a few weeks on either side of a new release.

Best of the bunch was a hamfisted attempt by Warner Music to tie in the Live 8 message with its opportune reissue of REM's back catalogue, which ended with the message: "MAKE POVERTY HISTORY: REM ALBUMS MID-PRICE."

OVER-ZEALOUS subbing at the *Times*... or something more sinister?

An open letter to home secretary Charles Clarke from organisations opposed to the identity cards bill was printed on 24 June, but sadly the last sentence was missing. It said: "We and our organisations, who represent a constituency of some 2,000,000 UK residents, hope that you are listening." Instead the letter concluded with just six signatures.



"This is Bob Bonkers, the president's special advisor on climate change"

EDITORIAL

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Still in a b8

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AS WORLD leaders gather in Scotland for the G8 conference, what example is being set by the hosts of the event? Not Britain, but the owner of the Gleneagles hotel, multinational drinks giant Diageo, which has huge business interests in Africa.

Diageo tries hard to play the part of benevolent employer, sponsoring African business reporting awards and providing anti-retroviral drugs to HIV-infected workers. But its record in other areas is very shaky indeed.

A report by the UN environmental protection agency highlighted Tanzania Breweries, part owned by Diageo, as one of the worst polluters of the Msimbazi River, dumping untreated effluent into the water and, according to another study, helping to render the river "practically devoid of life".

Meanwhile a report from the NGO Corporate Watch points out that time and again Diageo has made hundreds of workers redundant at its Nigerian plants in order to replace unionised staff with casual workers. Diageo also lobbies African governments for a clampdown on its major competitor, "traditional" home brews made from banana, maize or cassava. Its 2004 Corporate Citizenship report on East Africa, points to health and social risks from homemade alcohol (surely applicable to its own products too) and the loss of tax revenue, while ignoring any possible benefits of a sustainable local product.

READERS of the Barclay brothers' *Scotland on Sunday* are expecting a bloody series of demonstrations at the G8 summit.

Last month the paper announced on its front page that "G8 protests spark blood supply crisis". Apparently, the Scottish national blood transfusion service (ScotBlood) wanted Scots to donate an extra 20,000 pints of blood to prepare for violent demos, and plans were in place to import English blood if this was not enough to deal with expected rioting.

However, those excited by this bloodthirsty story are likely to be disappointed. ScotBlood told the *Eye* it was "not particularly concerned about the G8, we are more concerned about the Summer when donations drop".

ScotBlood is making a push for more blood this summer, but this is to deal with holidays not anarchists: donations drop as regular blood givers take vacations. Moreover, a spokesperson made clear that ScotBlood told the newspaper it wanted to recruit 20,000 extra donors, not stockpile an extra 20,000 pints of blood.

SATELLITE music channel MTV was delighted that Tony Blair agreed to answer questions from an audience of teenagers on the eve of the G8 concerts, calling it "a unique opportunity for young people to make their opinions heard."

"We are committed to giving our audience a platform to discuss the issues that affect them and we know they feel very passionately about the topics on G8's agenda," MTV's Michiel Bakker told reporters. "We look forward to a lively and thought-provoking debate."

So sure was the channel of the abilities of its audience that just a few hours before the recording producers were desperately ringing round newspapers and magazine offices asking "can you think of any questions we should ask Tony Blair?"

"THE heat and being demob happy may have had some effect," was the best excuse officials could come up with for why the chair of the defence select committee, Bruce George, had babbled on in support of arms company bribes to representatives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) at a meeting on tackling bribery on the last day of parliament last summer.

The OECD's report on the application of the convention on combating bribery was published in March, noting that: "An MP with significant oversight responsibilities regarding sensitive industries stated, however, that, in his view, bribery in international business transactions was inevitable, and that disallowing it could be dangerous as companies would then not be able to compete on a level-playing field. Such views, which reflect little awareness or acceptance of the convention and related changes in UK law, raise serious concerns, particularly in light of the MP's responsibilities."

The officials' comments were revealed after a request under the freedom of information act for the minutes of the meeting between parliamentarians and the OECD last summer. The meeting was not, in fact, minuted. Rather than hand over nothing, officials helpfully released two emails concerning the event from civil servants.

One noted that "everyone was a bit knackered" before explaining what was said. "It got worse when Mr George said that the arms industry was one of the most susceptible to bribes. It was worth millions of pounds and thousands of jobs and he would be amazed if many of the big contracts achieved by UK companies were not as a result of bribes. Apparently they have to do it because everyone else does and the contracts are worth millions... jobs etc..."

The other email adds: "When the report was published Mr George called me up and asked if he really did say these things. I had to tell him that he did."

"WE SHOULD never allow ourselves to create an impression of insincerity and inconsistency by attacking the government when it does the right things," Tory whizzkid David Cameron MP declared in a speech last Wednesday.

"Let me give you an example from a debate I'm involved in right now: the government's City Academy programme... It's incredibly tempting for an opposition to score points by opposing academies. But I've been to the Peckham Academy and the Harris City Technology College in Croydon. I will back them."

Lord Harris of Peckham, who funds the Peckham Academy, is also a major donor to the Conservative party and has been known to finance Tory leadership campaigns.

Lo and behold, on the very day Cameron gave his speech, Lord Harris duly came out in his support. "When I look at David Cameron," the carpet magnate announced, "I see a winner."



"Any concerns, my door is always open"

STREET OF SHAME

CONTRARY to Roy Greenslade's claims (see Hackwatch), the piece about the *Sunday Telegraph* in our last issue was not a "Private Eye fantasy". But two errors should be corrected.

Rosa Monckton, Dominic Lawson's wife, says she has neither seen nor spoken to her friend Fizzy Barclay, wife of Aidan Barclay, since January 2004, let alone lobbied her on behalf of her husband. Apparently she felt that having any contact with her erstwhile lunching companion might compromise Dominic Lawson's position. We're happy to accept this.

Secondly, the editor whom Lawson rang after his sacking was not Simon Kelner of the *Independent* but Tristan Davies of the *Independent on Sunday*.

In mitigation of the latter mistake, we can only say that Kelner and Davies have worked in tandem for so long – the Newman and Baddiel of journalism – that occasional confusion is inevitable, especially after lunch. Indeed, Kelner and Davies seem to be even more hugger-mugger than usual these days: it's almost as if they're plotting something. Surely not a new business venture, such as a national sports newspaper along the lines of *L'Equipe* or the *Corriere della Sport*?

CONSTERNATION at the *Observer*, where hacks were told by editor Roger Alton last week that 15 of them should volunteer for redundancy forthwith. If enough volunteers didn't come forward within a fortnight, sackings would ensue.

This follows an ultimatum from the board of Guardian Newspapers, horrified at the "shedloads of money" being lost by the *Observer* and the Saturday edition of the *Guardian*.

The Saturday *Guardian* – with its many handsome supplements – is actually losing even more money than the *Observer*. But *Grauniad* editor Alan Rusbridger refused to contemplate redundancies among his own hacks, pointing out that in any case the paper has a house agreement with the NUJ promising that no one will ever be sacked. So the *Observer* hacks will have to carry the can all on their own.

"BOSS gets £150,000 to move 40 miles nearer to the office," shrieked the *Daily Mail* on 24 June over the shocking news that new Boots CEO Richard Baker had been given a one-off relocation handout to move from Yorkshire to Lincolnshire.

"Details of the massive fee emerged in the company's annual report yesterday, leaving some shareholders wondering if it represented value for money," the paper reported.

Paul Dacre, the editor of the *Daily Mail*, as the *Eye* has noted before, has a perfectly good home in Sussex, around 60 miles from the paper's offices in London. But he also has a house in Islington, for the upkeep of which the company pays him an additional £77,000 a year on top of his £885,000 salary. Isn't life grand?

IN HIS *Observer* media column, Peter Preston notes admiringly that the *Times* is doing "hugely better" than any of its rivals. He attributes this to the paper's news coverage, which is "formidable" in its "range, number of stories and total space".

Alas, all this gush left him no space to mention the executive in charge of news at the *Times* – deputy editor Ben Preston, who happens to be Peter Preston's son. Well done, that lad!

PRINCESS DIARIES

"SOME will say that this is raking over dead embers, that Diana should be left in peace," admitted the *Sun* in an editorial on the day it began serialising Simone Simmons' latest book on the princess.

"What about the added heartbreak this will cause William and Harry, they will ask? The *Sun* does not for one moment believe the princes will be hurt by this book. They are not children any more. Their eternal memories of Diana are the joyous years they spent with a devoted mother. What better legacy could she leave them than the knowledge that she found great happiness herself?"

And indeed, what adult could fail to be delighted to learn that their father had "no clue as to a woman's geography"; that his lovemaking left their mother "uncomfortable and let down"; that she had "the first orgasm she had ever experienced" with a man who "persuaded her to engage in oral sex for the first time in her life", not to mention that they had been secretly blood tested because their family doubted their paternity?

Certainly not the two young men who the *Sun* declared less than two years ago were "deeply distressed, upset, angry and betrayed" by the "reopening of wounds" when stories appeared about their mother (although presumably that only applied to those which were being published at the time by the *Mirror*).

● ANYONE who doubted that Diana would have discussed such intimate issues with Simmons was invited to call a special *Sun* phoneline to "hear the tender greetings which reveal the closeness of

their friendship". Opinion was divided among those who invested 60p a minute as to which of the three answerphone messages from the late princess best demonstrated the intimacy of the two women – was it the one promising that "I'll speak to you in the morning cos I think you're busy"; the one informing her that "I'm in a meeting" or the impressive: "I'm on my way to tennis for an hour, I'll have this thing switched back on at one, whatever, whatever."

● SIMONE Simmons' claim that in penning two books about Diana she was simply carrying out the wishes of the late princess has been greeted with much scepticism in the media. But one hack who could shed some light on the matter has remained strangely silent.

In the introduction to her first attempt, 1998's *Diana The Secret Years*, Simmons revealed that "it was in February 1997, and she was sprawled on the sofas in her private sitting room at Kensington Palace... She dabbed at her eyes with a Kleenex, laughed again, and ordered me, one day, to write a book and 'tell it like it is... I want you to tell the truth. It'll be about time.' The *Daily Mail* journalist Richard Kay, one of her other close friends, was with us."

Curiously, Kay has never commented on this version of events. But then it is possible that, as author of *Diana: The Untold Story* and innumerable articles about his memories of the princess (and an equal number slagging off those who betray her memory by writing about her), he simply assumed Diana was talking to him at the time.

ONE YEAR ago, when the *Sun*, *Daily Star*, *Closer* and *Heat* magazines printed paparazzo shots of David Beckham standing on a hotel balcony in his underpants during the Euro 2004 championships in Portugal, lawyers for the Football Association leapt into action on his behalf.

The press complaints commission (PCC) was informed that the England captain considered the pictures "an unacceptable intrusion into his private life", and titles which printed them were threatened with "the withdrawal of opportunities" for access to the team during the tournament. Big Pictures, the agency which handled the pictures, swiftly backed down, deleting the images from its files and paying "substantial damages" to charity.

Two weeks ago, the *Sun*, *Daily Star*, *Daily Mail* and *Heat* magazine printed almost identical pictures of David Beckham on board a yacht in a pair of equally revealing Speedo swimming trunks. Curiously, there was not a peep from anyone about this blatant intrusion. Could this have anything to do with the fact that the credit on the photos was for one Jason Fraser, the sleazy king of the paparazzi who has boasted in the past that he and his highest-profile targets often "discuss potential pictures and enjoy a mutually trusting relationship"?

"HISTORIAN Martin Allen has written a book about Heinrich Himmler, revealing that the Nazi bigwig did not commit suicide but was assassinated by the British, with the full authority of the government," A. N. Wilson informed *Evening Standard* readers last Friday.

Wilson couldn't understand why this sensational story hadn't caused more of a stir. Although Allen had produced incontrovertible evidence in the form of Whitehall memos from 1945, "no newspaper seems to have picked up on its significance".

Alas, poor Wilson! The reason for press caution became all too apparent only a day later, when the *Daily Telegraph* revealed that the memos cited by Allen are modern forgeries.

"THINGS work better when you have a strong family structure," announced Sarah Sands, setting out her political stall as she took over the editorship of the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Her paper is certainly a family affair: new columnist Anna Stothard (daughter of ex-*Times* editor Peter Stothard) rubs shoulders with Oliver Pritchett and his cartoonist son Matt; husband and wife Rebecca Tyrrel and Matthew Norman, already regulars, have taken over new duties for Sands; Vicki Woods and her daughter Octavia pen an advice column together; Business columnist Luke Johnson is still occasionally joined in the paper by his dad Paul (no relation to Boris or Rachel Johnson, the brother and sister with columns in the *Daily Telegraph*, or their father Stanley, an occasional contributor), while Peaches Geldof merely writes about her famous dad.

Sadly for Sands she will no longer be working alongside her own husband. Kim Fletcher resigned as the Telegraph Group's editorial director because he felt that his wife's new position caused a conflict of interest – an opinion with which chairman Aidan Barclay and his father and uncle, who own the papers, agreed.



"I felt a lot better before I met Carole Caplin"



WHY MUST the London *Evening Standard* be so gloomy? The question was posed this week by *Grauniad* hack Stephen Moss, who took umbrage at the headline "TRAIN HELL" over a story about lengthy delays on a desperately hot train.

"If you took the *Standard*'s reports seriously, you would never take a train," he complained. "In fact, you would never step outside your front door... The *Standard* routinely makes London sound like Baghdad on a bad day." His advice to the paper's editor, Veronica Wadley? Cheer up! "This is a great city which, despite residual problems of poverty and overcrowding, is in fantastic shape."

This may surprise Wadley. Two years ago the same Stephen Moss applied for a job on the *Standard*. He wanted to work there, he said, because he admired its fearless campaigning against the worst aspects of London – and, in particular, the awful train services.

Flattery got him nowhere. Wadley and her features editor Guy Eaton turned Moss down, deciding he was "too lazy".

THE Sun's inexplicable gossip column *The Whip* took a break from thrilling readers with tales of such glamorous celebs as Sir Patrick Cormack, Bernard Jenkin and Gwyneth Dunwoody last week to take a swipe at "that downmarket tabloid the *Daily Mail*".

The paper, the column reported, was "in trouble yet again... being sued for libel by Sir Elton John after his annual White Tie and Tiara charity ball. The singer has called in his lawyers following a 'vicious and ludicrous' story claiming that guests were told not to speak to Elton unless he spoke to them."

Whip editor Michael Kallenbach overlooked three facts which could have added some extra spice to this story: 1) The singer is also suing the *Sun's* News International stablemate the *Sunday Times* over the same story; 2) the biggest libel settlement in newspaper history, one million pounds, was in the case Elton John v. the *Sun* in 1988 after the paper printed a number of "vicious and ludicrous" stories about him; and 3) so unimpressed is *Sun* editor Rebekah Wade by her downmarket tabloid rival that she recently poached Katherine Bergen, deputy editor of the *Mail's* Ephraim Hardcastle column, to come and work on... *The Whip*!

TIMES columnist Matthew Parris is outraged to have been ranked only 80th in the *Independent on Sunday's* "Pink List" of the UK's most important gays.

He is particularly exercised that Peter Mandelson polled a full 77 places above him at number three. "He wouldn't even be on the list if it wasn't for me," complains Parris.

HACKWATCH

Prof Greenslade's Masterclass

SEVEN years ago, the *Grauniad* media pundit Roy Greenslade wrote an adulatory profile of *Sunday Telegraph* editor Dominic Lawson. He quoted a warning from one *Sun Tel* hack: "Whatever you do, Roy, please don't say he's a lovely man. A lot of people at the paper won't agree with you."

But Greenslade ignored the caveat. "I have always been friendly with Dominic Lawson," he explained, "have occasionally written for him, have given him advice, when asked, and have always enjoyed his company."

He still does. Last week Greenslade wrote an article about Lawson's sacking which read as if taken down at dictation speed from the man himself. "By far the most preposterous set of allegations about the reasons for Lawson's firing were published in *Private Eye* which, as we all know, is noted for its accuracy," he raged. "Almost every detail of its take on the affair was wrong."

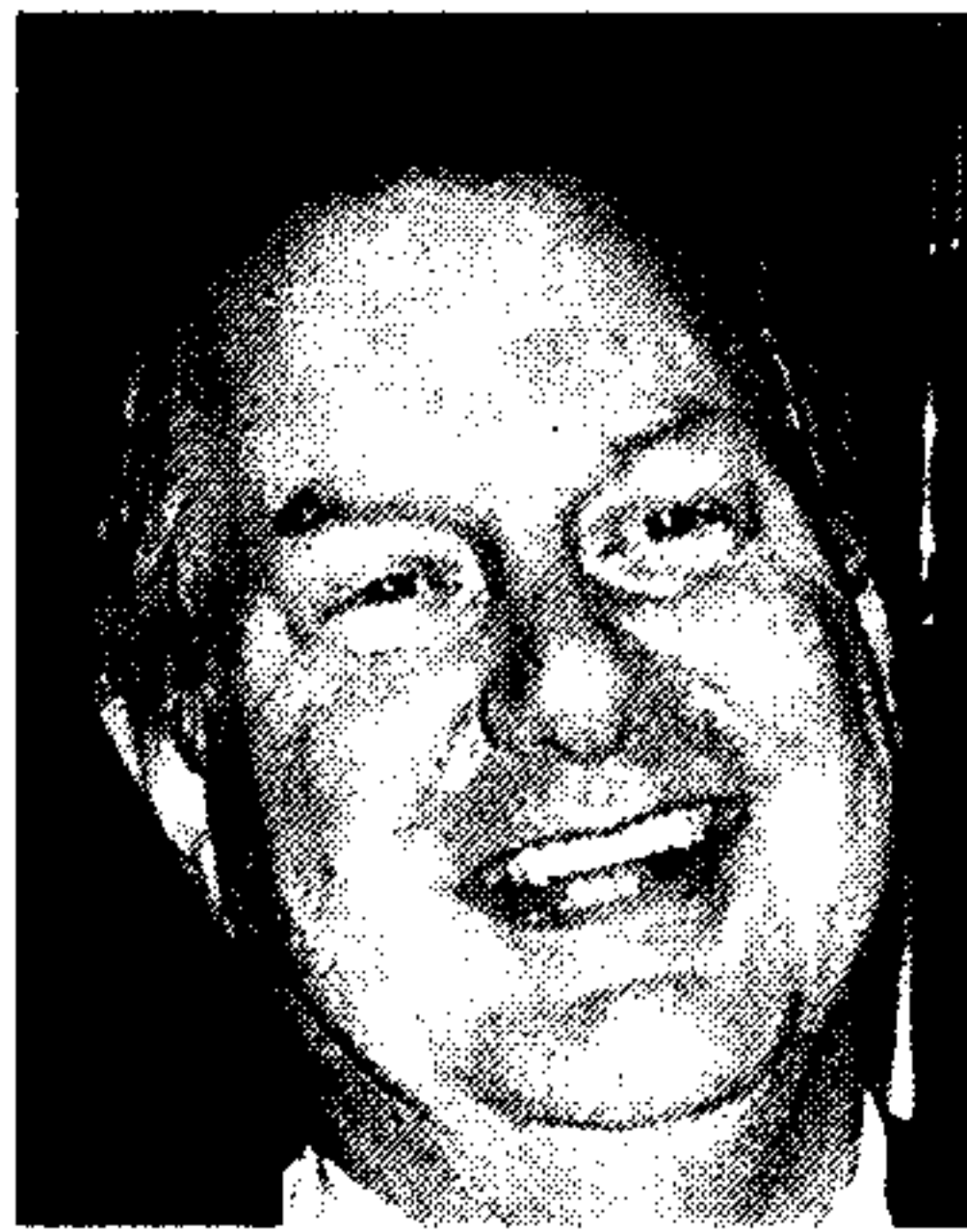
Actually, most of his rebuttals turned out to be nothing of the kind. For example: the *Eye* said that Lawson's bosses, having ordered him to concentrate on improving his own paper, were irritated that he kept suggesting changes to the *Daily Telegraph* instead. Greenslade demolished the "fantasy" thus: "Lawson believed that his new employers would benefit from his lengthy experience with the company so he made suggestions about how the *Daily Telegraph* and *Spectator* might develop. The Barclays were keener for him to concentrate on the *Sunday Telegraph's* development." So there!

Greenslade conceded that some might wonder if it was worth "taking issue with a *Private Eye* fantasy, given that every issue is replete with errors". Nevertheless, his unswerving commitment to truth and honesty obliged him to do so. And who better to deliver such a pious lecture than Roy Greenslade, professor of journalism at City University?

As editor of Robert Maxwell's *Daily Mirror* in 1990, this same Greenslade published a sensational scoop alleging that Arthur Scargill had paid off his mortgage with secret funds from Colonel Gadafy. A mere 12 years later, he confessed in the *Guardian* that it was probably bollocks: "Sorry, Arthur... We were all taken in." Greenslade's *mea culpa* appeared under the headline "The One I Got Wrong." Alas! The article was itself riddled with further errors, and much of the following week's *Media Guardian* was given over to correcting them.

Roy's journalism students can learn much about their craft from his *Grauniad* pontifications. "Though Rothermere's intentions are unfathomable," he wrote after the death of Sir David English, editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers, "I cannot imagine him creating an editor-in-chief in the coming months." Paul Dacre was made editor-in-chief one month later, but this didn't stop Greenslade offering another well-informed assessment: "We can discount reports of the imminent demise of *Mail on Sunday* editor Jonathan Holborow." Holborow was duly sacked a few weeks later. Greenslade also spent much of the 1990s forecasting the closure of the *Daily Star* – until belatedly forced to concede that "my previous predictions of its imminent demise were wide of the mark".

As are so many of his predictions. "Can the editor of the *Times*, Robert Thomson, survive the paper's tabloid troubles much longer?" he wondered last September. "The *Times* is an unhappy ship and the failure of the tabloid version lies at the heart of the problem..." Rupert Murdoch



cannot be happy at spending so much without obtaining better results. He may blame Thomson."

Whoops! In May this year, writing of the quality press's circulation problems, Greenslade noted that "The *Times* is still bucking the trend, having improved its sales in the past 12 months by more than 5 percent... No wonder the editor of the *Times*, Robert Thomson, boasted last week of his paper's 'unique success'."

A short memory is obviously an essential attribute for a successful hack. "So Piers Morgan, the editor everyone believed had more lives than a cat, has gone," he wrote last May. "But is it fair? Should he have paid the price for being the victim of a malicious hoax by publishing pictures which purported to show British soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners?... He acted for the public interest in trying to highlight a controversial and distasteful matter."

Less than a fortnight earlier, however, Greenslade had written: "Of course, it is plausible to argue that the pictures may be a set-up of some sort, a staged reconstruction of what really did happen. In other words, if not strictly genuine, they nevertheless reveal the truth. But that is moving dangerously close to what we might call the Gilligan defence: some of the details were wrong, m'lud, but it was, in essence, true." The professor had no truck with this excuse. If the pictures were fakes, then "his [Moron's] credibility, and that of his paper, would be undermined forever... It would be the bloodiest error any newspaper has ever made."

But then consistency and integrity are also over-rated journalistic virtues. In the *Grauniad*, Greenslade denounces the prurience and prejudice of the tabloids ("meretricious rubbish"). Yet he was Kelvin Mackenzie's second-in-command at the *Sun* between 1981 and 1987, the era of such un-meretricious headlines as GOTCHA, ZEE FRENCH ARE FEELTHY – OFFICIAL, LABOUR PICKS RENT-BOY AS SCHOOL BOSS and BENN ON THE COUCH – A TOP PSYCHIATRIST'S VIEW OF BRITAIN'S LEADING LEFTIE. The paper also distinguished itself by running a bogus and hurtful "interview" with Marica McKay, the widow of a Falklands war hero.

In his *Grauniad* column, Greenslade deplores the homophobia of gorbliney hacks such as Richard Littlejohn. "Almost every criticism of Peter Mandelson," he laments, "is crudely suggestive about his sexual preference." How unlike the *Sun* in Greenslade's day, which waged a noisy campaign against "pulpit poofs" and indeed poofs of any other kind. In 1984, when the Press Council ruled that the *Sun* was "improper and extremely offensive to advocate discrimination against homosexual people and encourage employers to discriminate", Greenslade defended the paper's stand against "sick nonsense". As editor of the *Mirror*, in 1990, he carried a huge splash suggesting that Prince Edward was a "closet queen". "I knew the story fitted the tabloid agenda," he explained a few years later. "It was prurient, puerile and implicitly homophobic. I didn't want to do it but as a tabloid editor fighting a war against a paper I knew would have paid thousands for that story, I knew what I had to do. It was a guaranteed seller."

Distressingly, Professor Greenslade himself is not such a guaranteed seller: he has just learnt that his weekly column is to be axed, as the *Grauniad* prepares to relaunch itself as a more serious, high-minded newspaper – a British *Le Monde*. And which *homme serieux* will take over, at least temporarily? Step forward Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill.

Poor Prof Greenslade! Seldom has the Curse of Gnome struck more quickly – or more lethally.



HOME secretary Charles Clarke lost no time last week briefing selected hacks on his latest campaign. "Big Ears" has long blustered about the need to silence "celebrity civil servants" – code for the various "tsars" the Dear Leader has appointed to commandeer his pet initiatives and programmes.

One such "celebrity civil servant" to leave the home office under Clarke's watch, purportedly over serious differences over presentation, is Martin Narey, the soon-to-be ex-chief of the chaotic national offender management service (Noms). (The *Eye* was wrong to suggest Narey has been angling for a job in the private prisons industry: he is to take up a far worthier position as CEO of Barnardo's.)

But the real target of Clarke's ire is the iron-heeled Louise Casey, who came to fame as a director of Shelter – and after advising the public not "to give money to beggars". Casey heads the antisocial behaviour unit in the home office and is a favourite of Tony Blair. Another target for Big Ears is Rod Morgan, the head of the youth justice board who recently advised ministers to stop describing errant kids as "yobs".

Clarke's campaign immediately hit the buffers when it became apparent that Number 10 had been busy briefing both the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sunday Times*. Both newspapers mysteriously discovered the same "leaked" minutes of a meeting in Downing Street on 20 June, during which the Dear Leader rebuked Big Ears for not being tough enough and failing to share his enthusiasm for further expansion of antisocial behaviour orders, zero tolerance and the "respect" agenda. For good measure the embattled Casey, the target of Clarke's ire, was told to report to the PM directly.

Now that the old bruiser and bully has been put in his place, expect overtures to be made by Clarke to the Gordon Brown camp. Long at loggerheads with each other, Big Ear's will think that it is high time to kiss and make-up.

MORE on the election scuffle in Romford involving supporters of Tory bovver boy Andrew Rossindell and Labour supporter Dave Harding.

Questions are being asked why Tory HQ sent party official Greg Stafford to Romford to keep an eye on the campaign conducted by Rossindell – who happens to be deputy chairman of the Conservative party. Could it be there was some nervousness at complaints of the apparent bad behaviour of Tory canvassers from a school mistress and parish priest outside two schools in the borough?

Whether any senior Tory official was around on the evening of an altercation outside an underground station in the constituency on the eve of the poll is another matter altogether. A Labour volunteer handing out leaflets was allegedly surrounded by young Rossindell supporters who proceeded to taunt and spit at him. Inspector Knacker is now investigating claims that arose from the ensuing altercation when the Labour volunteer reacted to his tormentors, clobbering one of them.

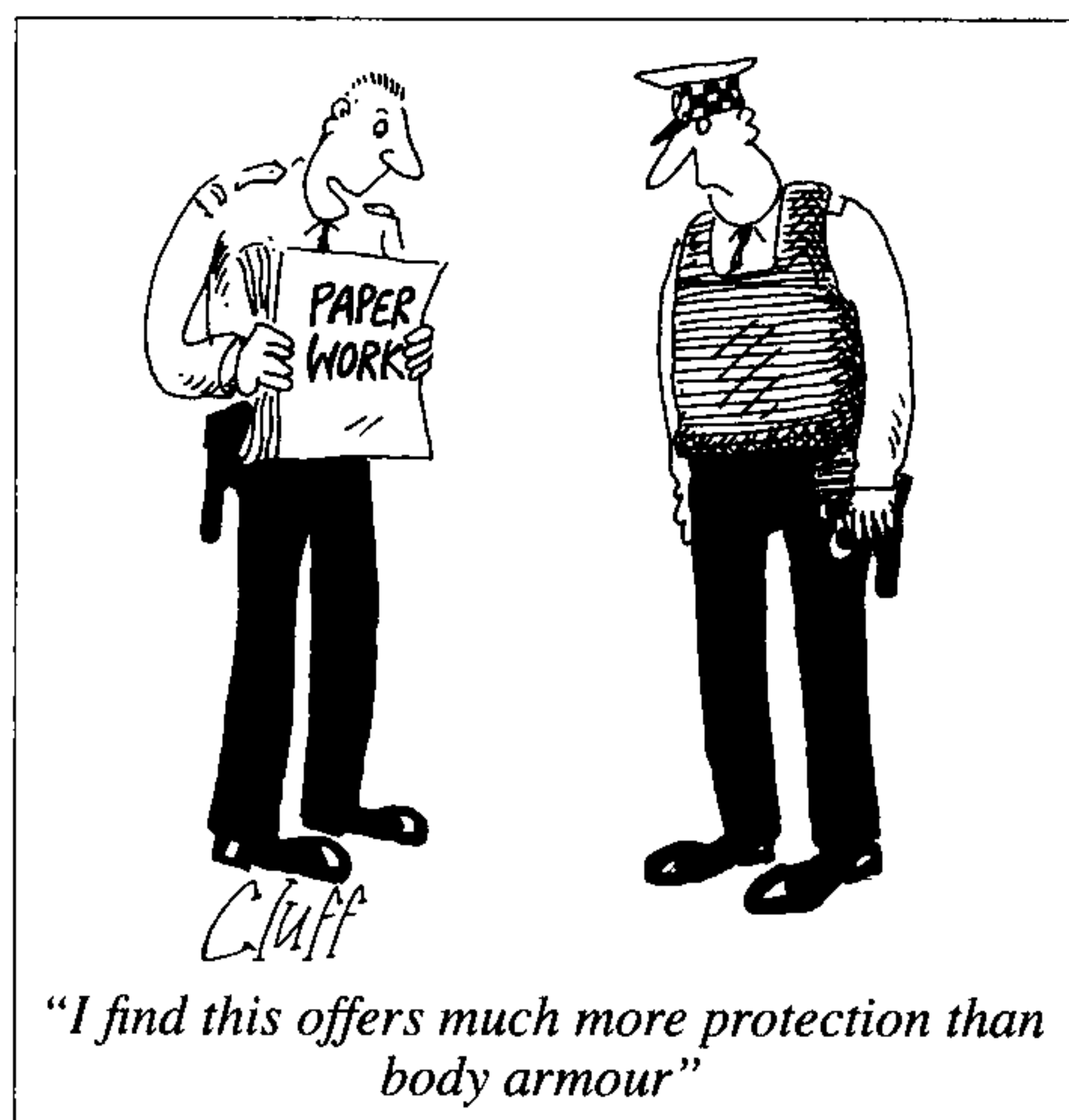
Although the fisticuffs were reported in the *Daily Mail*, no reference was made to the fact that Rossindell was present but took no part in the scuffle and promptly ran off shortly afterwards to find a telephone (but didn't call Inspector Knacker). No charge has been pressed, but that might be how Conservative central office wants it.

AT THE beginning of 2004, transport secretary Alistair Darling announced plans to introduce armed sky marshals on flights from the UK, a move which prompted strong reservations from Balpa, the British Airline Pilots' Association.

"If there were a perceived threat, the captain simply wouldn't fly," said a Balpa spokesman. "It's difficult to envisage a situation where marshals would be used."

Darling, who had been under pressure from the American security authorities for some time to introduce sky marshals, was reacting to the grounding of several international flights the month before, following warnings from the CIA that al-Qaeda was plotting to explode a chemical or biological device on board an aircraft. Charlie Falconer, the constitutional affairs secretary, explained that there was evidence "that we have to act on". No attack ever materialised.

Now we know what this evidence was. The American television network NBC revealed last week that CIA analysts had got it into their heads that al-Qaeda was sending secret coded messages via headlines on the al-Jazeera news station. As even Tom Ridge, the American homeland security chief, told NBC: "I've got to admit to wondering whether or not it was very credible."



HEALTH secretary Patricia Hewitt's planned £3bn expansion in private sector provision of NHS treatment will require close work with the biggest private hospital company, BUPA.

Parts of the NHS are already working intensively on the relationship. London's Charing Cross hospital is funding a cancer unit exclusively for BUPA patients, from which it hopes to get a return to help its own parlous finances. Meanwhile the government's "choice" agenda will see thousands of patients go the other way as more NHS operations are farmed out to private firms like BUPA.

The company itself is no stranger to conflicts of interest. After a critical office of fair trading (OFT) report five years ago, it promised to keep strict "Chinese walls" between its health insurance and hospital services divisions to ensure that it didn't exploit its market dominance by, for example, cutting out rival private hospitals from the lucrative business of treating BUPA insurance customers.

Now BUPA stands accused of doing exactly this. Having recently written to customers using the private St Anthony's cardiac hospital in Surrey, warning that doing so might compromise their insurance cover (just the kind of news a heart patient needs), BUPA is attracting the renewed attention of the OFT after complaints that the company is breaching its five-year-old undertaking.

A number of St Anthony's patients, meanwhile, have complained to the financial services authority (FSA) that they may have been mis-sold policies as they were led to believe the renowned hospital would be open to them. But it remains to be seen how deeply the regulators will delve into the murky world of private health now that government health policy depends on it.

SERCO, the PFI firm best known for running prisons and hospitals, has had an unreported role influencing Britain's electoral system, *Private Eye* has learnt.

In 2003 and 2004, Serco consultants worked for the electoral policy division of the department of constitutional affairs and the electoral commission. They analysed "the cost of 'traditional' elections", the "cost of all-postal pilots" and "the cost model of introducing reform measures from Voting for Change".

The electoral commission estimates that a traditional general election costs £50m and that the cost of all-postal votes "compared favourably" with this. It backed Labour's pilots for all postal ballots, but did ask that the government go over to individual voter registration. (Currently voters are registered by household, which coupled with increased postal voting, increases the possibility of fraud.)

However, Labour has so far rejected proposals for the more expensive individual voter registration, but still seems keen on postal voting, presumably partly because of Serco's figures. The firm itself was unable to point *Private Eye* to any special experience in electoral administration or voting arrangements, but said this did not matter. The work was "just bread and butter consulting helping the department with business case development and financial planning modelling for postal voting".

WHEN Philip Dunne, newly-elected Tory MP for Ludlow in Shropshire, made his maiden speech, he spoke eloquently about his "fine Georgian town built on a mediaeval town footprint."

He also praised Ludlow's independent traders: "Not for Ludlow the uniformity of the nation's high streets. We boast four independent butchers and four master bakers."

In fact Ludlow has four independent booksellers too, but these didn't get a mention in the MP's speech. Quite the opposite, in fact. "If I may say so, the only thing that some say that we lack is a modern bookshop."

FACT: Mr Dunne happens to be chairman of Ottakar's plc, in which he owns 1,186,100 ordinary shares.

CON-SULTANTS' CORNER

LIGHT has been shed on the dark world of consultancy in a new book, *Rip Off!*, by former management consultant David Craig.

As the title suggests, Craig exposes the methods used by consultants to generate huge fees at the expense of gullible clients using methods ranging from billing for fictitious work to overcharging for expenses.

One particularly effective scam emerged in the US last year when three big consultancy firms agreed to pay \$108m to settle allegations that they had billed their client for enormous travel expenses in full despite receiving annual rebates adding up to hundreds of millions of dollars which they kept to themselves.

The firms involved were PwC, KPMG and Ernst & Young, names familiar in this country partly because of the huge amounts they earn from the British taxpayer. The main culprit in the American case, PwC, is a prominent beneficiary of the government's enthusiasm for consultancy and is currently doing very nicely out of the commercialisation of the NHS, having advised on independent treatment centres and countless PFI deals.

The NHS is set to be the leading user of consultants over the next few years as it spends an estimated £30bn on its IT programme. Thankfully those responsible have plenty of experience of consultancy and will doubtless be keeping close tabs on where the taxpayer's money is going. Health secretary Patricia Hewitt was an Andersen Consulting partner until 1997; and Richard Grainger, IT director general for the NHS, was a partner in Deloitte Consulting until joining the government three years ago.

TAX & BEND

COMPUTER cock-ups associated with the tax credits fiasco are deflecting attention from what is in fact another of chancellor Gordon Brown's accounting tricks.

Most of the overpayments at the heart of the problem have arisen not because of IT provider EDS's incompetence (though its chaotic contribution should not be underestimated – see IT News) but because the complex system makes weekly or monthly payments based on annual incomes that are not known when the credits are paid.

When claimants' circumstances change, many are faced with unaffordable demands for repayment of tax credits they have already spent or the sudden loss of credits they were budgeting for, invariably with little explanation and often based on inaccurate calculations.

So why introduce such a cumbersome system that manages to cause misery to thousands while it is supposed to increase their incomes? The answer is that it allows tax credits to be treated as "negative income tax", so it looks like the chancellor is collecting less tax. Nor do the payments count as public spending on benefits in the way that they did under previous, more practical, tax credit regimes.

So – hey presto! – government income and expenditure fall, helping Gordon rebut claims that he's a "tax and spend" chancellor. Meanwhile millions of tax credit claimants are left at best bemused and often in serious financial trouble.

THE tax credits fiasco has proved so stressful for disabled Sean Pearman, 35, he is now suing the Inland Revenue.

Mr Pearman, who has complex neurological disorders, had problems with his tax credits in early 2003 when he moved in with his partner and tried to change his sole claim to a joint claim. Not only did he fail to get the message across, but the Inland Revenue also started paying him a higher rate disability claim before suddenly asking for it all back.

After months of negotiations, in March Mr Pearman finally got a letter from the Revenue's customer relations office, apologising "again for the inconvenience we have caused you over the last two years". The letter accepted there had been a detrimental affect on his and his partner's health and said: "This is due primarily to the overpayment, but your situation has been made worse by the length of time it is taking to deal with it and also the standard of customer service provided in that time. In view of this we are making a payment to you for the cost you have incurred in pursuing your query... and also a payment acknowledging the contributory effect our poor service has had on your health." He was given £100 and the promise of a review of compensation – before the Revenue again decided the overpayments weren't its fault and wanted all the money back.

Despite this disgraceful inefficiency, staff at the tax credit office are to receive a "performance" bonus based on their getting 94 percent of claims, changes in circumstance and renewals accurately processed. In March the department's own prediction of accuracy was 99.52 percent. But how accurate is that?



IT NEWS

WITH ID cards under assault from all sides, Tony Blair can be grateful for the support of his head of e-government, former Accenture boss Ian Watmore.

But has Watmore gone way beyond the bounds of normal civil service neutrality to stick up for the hated cards? One *Eye* reader who heard Watmore addressing a conference of chief information officers last month (*The Economist Sixth Annual Chief Information Officers' and IT Directors' Summit*) certainly thinks so.

When asked the home office denied this and added that Watmore is "tasked by the prime minister with an outward facing role on government IT. Part of that role is to change perceptions across the board of government IT and change media perceptions of government IT projects". Strip away the managementspeak, and managing "perceptions" sounds like a job for a spin-doctor.

TO MANAGE readers' perceptions, *Private Eye* is happy to remind them of the following government computer cock-ups:

● **Passport Office** computerisation (Siemens): £12.6m spent clearing backlogs when system failed.

● **Home Office** asylum seeker "casework" system (Siemens): Abandoned in 2001, still not working three years after it should be. Cost: £80m.

● **"Libra"** computerisation of magistrates courts (ICL Fujitsu): Costs up from £146m to £390m.

● **"Pathway"**, the Post Office benefits "Smart Card", designed to end benefit fraud by confirming identity (ICL Fujitsu): Abandoned in 1999 with £1bn losses – £577m loss to the Post Office, £127m to the DSS.

● **Swanwick** air traffic control system (Lockheed): £120m cost overruns.

● **Individual Learning Accounts** (Capita): Went £50m over budget then scrapped.

● **NIRS2** (Accenture): Failures in national insurance computerisation cost at least £150m compensation and extra staff time.

● **Child Support Agency** (EDS): System arrived late and £50m over budget.

● **"Datacentre"** contract, supposed to consolidate cabinet office IT (ITNET): £85m contract cancelled in 2004.

● **Criminal Records Bureau** (Capita): Serious delays and £150m overruns.

● After the **Medical Research Council's** flagship research institute in Cambridge, the **Laboratory of Molecular Biology**, paid £55m to LogicaGMC for a computerised purchasing system called FAMIS which failed spectacularly, the boffins reverted to paper-based ordering. For the past few months, they have been struggling to run the two in tandem – paper plus Logica. "It's two-thirds as fast as paper alone – and requires more staff," says an insider.

● **Forthcoming fiascos:** John Prescott wants to replace 46 fire control rooms in England and Wales with nine regional centres under something called the "FiReControl" project. The system will need a new multi-million pound computer system – and one of those tipped to provide it is **Crapita**. Great news for anyone trapped in a burning building...

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Individual performance would be differentiated based upon their costs and quality, although certification may be needed with newer technologies until quality metrics are understood. The effect would be Darwinian for both the employer and the company."

– *Blog on EDS website by the company's "most innovative thought leaders" that fails to mention the tax credits fiasco or any other EDS cock-up.*

WORLD OF SPORT

LIFE is one calamity after another these days for Wayne Rooney's agent Paul Stretford and his Proactive sports management group, as the Curse of Gnome takes its inevitable toll.

In December 2002 Stretford demanded that the *Eye* pay him and his company £50,000 in damages after we drew attention to various murky dealings and conflicts of interest in the football transfer market. But no writ ever materialised.

Last year Stretford did make it to court with another case – as star prosecution witness in the trial of a rival agent, John Hyland. Stretford alleged that Hyland, from whom he poached Rooney, had tried to blackmail him for huge sums of money. But the case was dropped in mid-trial when the prosecution found documents showing that Stretford had given false evidence to the court.

Suddenly it is Stretford who finds himself on the defensive. Lawyers for Hyland's firm announced last Friday that they are now suing Stretford over the snatching of Rooney, demanding £1m damages for "inducing a breach of contract and wrongful interference with business".

Meanwhile, Stretford's company – and Kevin Keegan – suffered yet another legal setback last week, this time in a Copenhagen courtroom. They had sued the former sports editor of Ekstra Bladet, Olav Andersen, and the ex-head of the Danish players' union, Palle Sorensen, for raising questions about Mikkel Bishcoff's transfer from AB Copenhagen to Keegan's Manchester City in July 2002.

Keegan, as Andersen noted, is himself a shareholder in Proactive – and documents produced during the trial showed that agents at Proactive acted for both Bishcoff and Manchester City during the transfer negotiations, contrary to FIFA rules. The judge ruled that neither Keegan nor Proactive had been defamed, and ordered them to pay the defendants' legal costs.

This comes two weeks after the Football Association charged Stretford with bringing the game into disrepute. The charges relate to his dealings with Rooney as well as his misleading testimony in last year's trial. If found guilty by the FA's disciplinary commission, he faces an unlimited fine and the revoking of his agent's licence.

CRICKETING spin doctor Colin Gibson is at the centre of another storm.

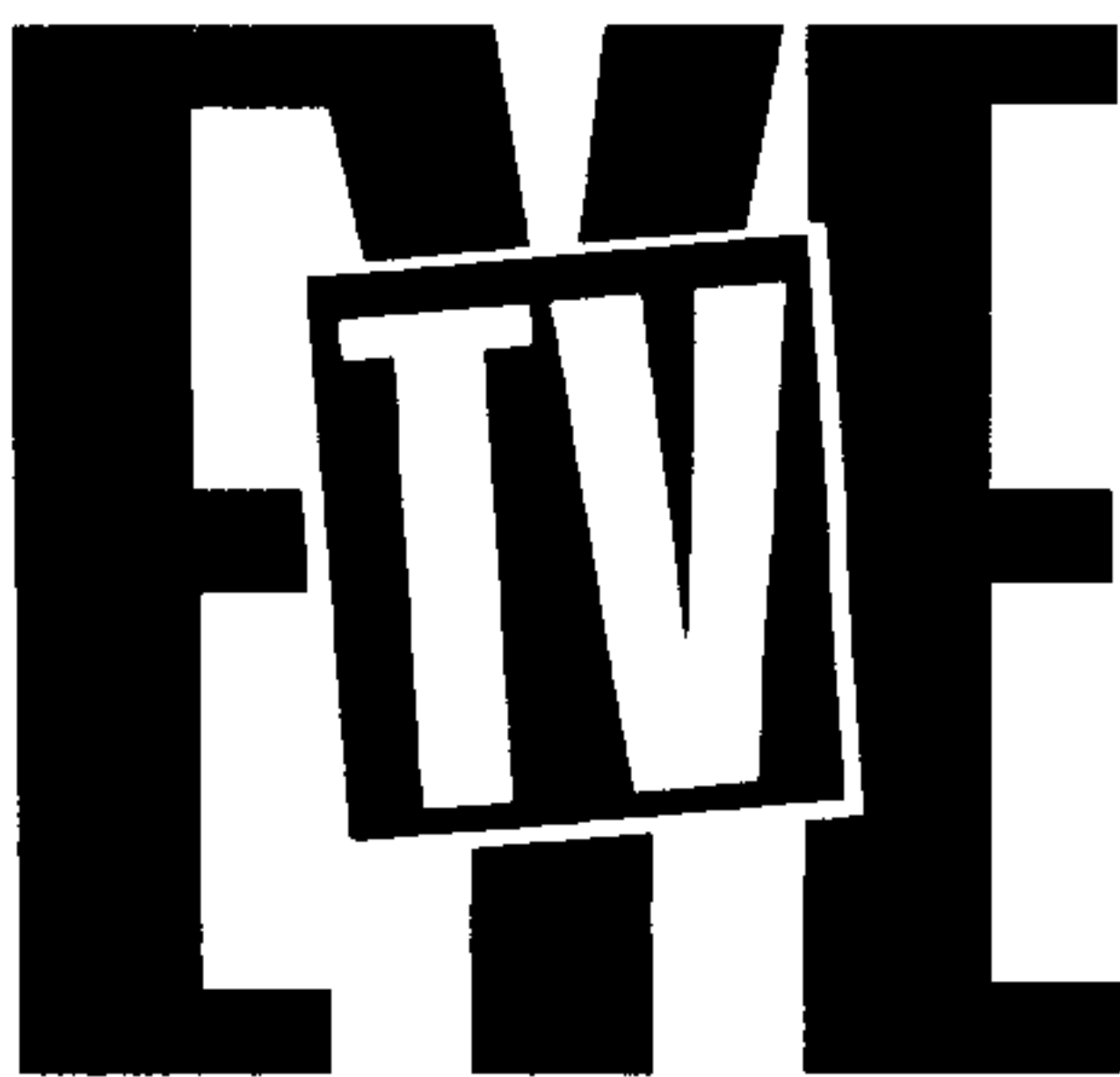
The former *Daily Mail* sports editor was booted out of his communications job at the Football Association after trying to cut a deal with the *News of the World* over Faria Alam's relationship with his boss Mark Palios. Shortly after resigning in disgrace, he landed a job at the England and Wales Cricket Board as head of communications.

Recent allegations, which the Australians believe were made with the full knowledge of Gibson's department, that Aussie batsman Matthew Hayden swore at children holding flags in a guard of honour have caused outrage in the tourists' camp.

Hayden, a committed Christian and parent, strongly denies the allegations. The Aussies have demanded an apology, but the ECB is holding its counsel over the affair, even though no witness to the incident has yet come forward.

Interestingly, when TV technical bods dug out a tape from the camera specifically employed to film the players coming on to the pitch, they found no evidence of Hayden interacting with the children at all. Most odd. Surely suggestions that the whole affair is a ruse to put the Australians off their game before the Ashes can't be true?





Live 8 (BBC1/BBC2/BBC3)

IF YOU believe that Live 8 and Bob Geldof should be beyond criticism, then do not read this piece. But the concert occupied 20 hours of television across three channels and cost at least £1m of licence-payers' money and so some might think it's reasonable to discuss whether the time and cash were well-spent.

The main problem was always going to be tone, especially once Jonathan Ross was given the presenter's chair. The BBC had promised in advance that the broadcast would be entertaining but also engage with the issues, in which case booking Wossy was like hiring Julian Clary to host the Queen Mother's funeral.

Physically incapable of going five minutes without making a joke about disability or sex or sometimes both, Ross, wearing a ludicrous yellow suit to distance himself from the Dimplebys of the world, was soon suggesting to co-host Jo Whiley that her boots had "a slight orthopaedic quality. Do you have one leg shorter than the other?"

Whiley had more problems when she got to the "rock garden" where she was interviewing celebs. No one had checked the camera angles and her first position on the sofa put her guest directly in front of the catering tables for the A-listers. So, as yet another celeb declared that an African was dying of starvation every three seconds, a big silver ladle was spooning seconds or even possibly thirds of high-class salads and rices into porcelain bowls.

The interviews in the rock garden were fine, although every single singer used the word "surreal", as if they had just invented

it, to describe the experience of performing. The BBC's real liability was Fearn Cotton, interviewer at large, who managed the difficult trick of making pop stars seem articulate by her daft questions: "Knowing how brilliant and amazing Live Aid was, is Live 8, like, amazing too?"

Because the coverage was so long, the show ended up interviewing many of the same stars both outside with Fearn and inside with Ross or Whiley. As the former caught them unprepared in natural light and other two offered studio conditions with proper lighting and make-up, there was the strange effect of performers suddenly looking 20 years younger within hours.

The vanity of pop stars also took a knocking in other ways. Some, stopping singing to hand songs over to the audience, discovered embarrassingly that no one knew them. Others suffered from the delusion that the meaning of songs can be changed at a stroke (shown when Sir Elton switched his Marilyn song to Diana).

Travis cheerfully sang "Why Does It Always Rain On Me?" over film of children dying of drought and Saint Bob himself hammered the refrain of his greatest hit – "and the lesson today is how to die" – as if death by famine and by a crazed American high-school student with a gun are pretty much the same thing.

The other big question involved the BBC's identification with the event. Before the concert began, the editorial policy bods had issued warnings that BBC presenters must not appear to be part of Geldof's crusade or to side with his opinions uncritically. When Richard Curtis and Bob Geldof say that the future of Africa all comes down to just "eight guys in a room", they had forgotten the 28 guys in a room at Television Centre worrying about charter renewal.

The communiqué, when it emerged, stated that, above all, the BBC coverage must not suggest that "there is only one solution to world poverty". It was advised that a proper model for the coverage would be a party political conference, at which the BBC is reporting but not supporting the event.

Fine words, but there were two problems. The first was that it was a bit late. BBC1 had already screened Curtis's debt-cancellation rom-com *The Girl In The Cafe* and the top man's own series *Geldof in Africa*. BBC2 had broadcast a 90-minute documentary on the 20th anniversary of Live Aid made by Brook Lapping, a subsidiary of Bob's Ten Alps company. And most BBC channels had shown emotional reports from Africa by its own reporters.

The other difficulty was that the comparison with Labour in Blackpool or the Tories in Brighton doesn't work because the relationship between performers, presenters and audience is so different. A Dimpleby or a Paxman has spent decades demonstrating objectivity by challenging the different sides in interviews. Their sense of distance has been helped in recent years by the fact that the public is increasingly hostile to politicians and so programmes get cheered for treating ministers and MPs with disdain. But the success of a Jonathan Ross depends on the sense that he is part of the world he features in his series: a celebrity himself. If the BBC hadn't asked him to host the programme, he'd have been out on stage introducing one of the acts, interchangeable with David Beckham or Ricky Gervais. Whereas, if Dimpleby made a speech at the Tory conference instead of hosting it, he'd be sacked.

And, because he's a member of the showbiz aristocracy himself, Wossy simply can't ask hard questions of his peers. While he has a reputation for irreverence, this comes from using sexual innuendo and making cracks about cripples rather than challenging anyone's opinions. If he seriously took on Geldof over debt or corruption or suggested to Sir Elton that the day was just a lot of spoilt pop stars appeasing their consciences, they'd all flounce out and refuse to come on his TV or radio shows next time they have something to plug.

If it's claiming that the coverage is impartial, the BBC, like the butts of Wossy's favourite jokes, don't have a leg to stand on.

'Remote Controller'

MEDIA BALLS

WHEN asked by the *Financial Times* back in June 2002 whether privatisation was an option for funding the BBC, Tessa Jowell was clear: "The answer is no." Two years later and BBC Technology was flogged off to Siemens.

Now BBC Broadcast has been sold for £166m to an Australian business consortium. No senior management posts will go, but after a one-year moratorium, everyone expects jobs to be lost elsewhere because of the sheer size of the Aussie bid: the Macquarie Capital Alliance Group paid £166m for Broadcast and had to borrow money to clinch it.

The loan was underpinned by the French bank BNP Paribas. That's the bank that is under the scrutiny of US congressional investigators probing the UN oil-for-food scandal. One of the bank's largest shareholders (according to the US department of defence) is Nadhmi Auchi, a close associate of Saddam Hussein.

Jowell assured the *FT* that privatisation was not an option. But Michael Cook, a CEO at a Macquarie subsidiary, had a different quote for the same paper: "What we have here is essentially a privatisation of an iconic British business," he enthused.

MORE drivel from Tom Loosemore, the BBC's "strategist and project director charter review": "The BBC is on fire and my job is to get them to smell the smoke and then persuade them not to panic."

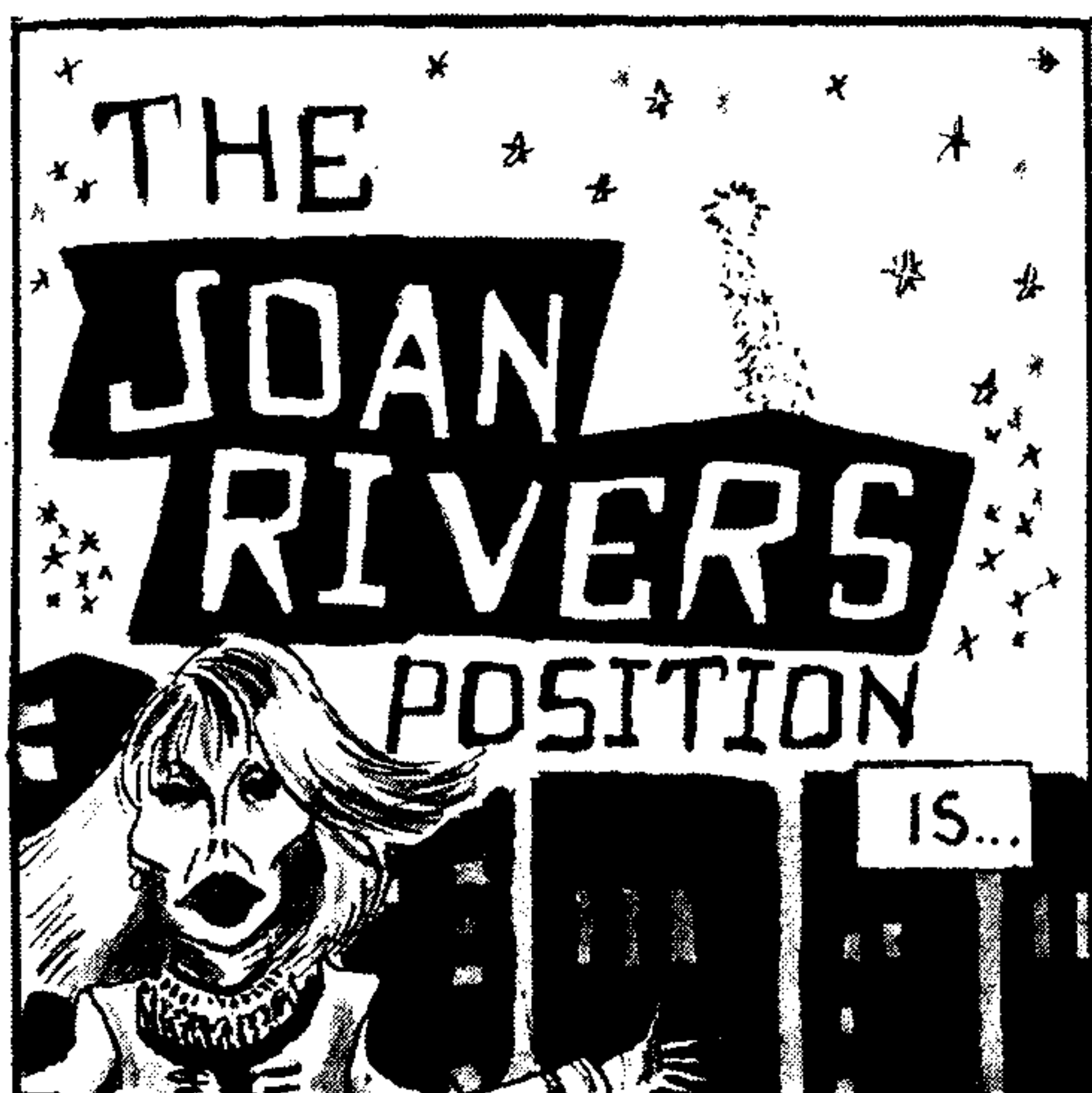
The flames emanate from a "keynote debate" in which Loosemore discussed "The Future of Factual: Dead or Alive". He's firmly in the "dead" camp: "The genre is meaningless and audiences don't need us to be an intermediary when they are building and sharing knowledge for and between one another."

That's bad news for the producers of landmark series such as Corelli Barnett's *The Great War*, David Attenborough's wildlife epics, *The Shock Of The New* and the travelogues presented by Michael Palin – all these and many more are produced by the very department now deemed a corpse by the suit head-hunted to "direct" the Beeb's charter renewal bid.

TYPICAL. You wait ages for a drama about the resignation of David Blunkett, and then by the time three come along at once, he's firmly ensconced back in the cabinet.

Following *Times* hack Ginny Dougray's *Blunkett the Musical*, and *Spectator* irritant Toby Young's latest project, a "Ray Cooney-style farce" called "Who's the Daddy?" which opens this month at the King's Head in Islington, Channel 4's latest digital channel More4 will launch this autumn with its own "entertaining, intelligent and provocative" dramatised version of his affair with Kimberly Quinn, *A Very Social Secretary*.

Showing how committed he remains to issues of free speech despite losing his berth at the home office, Blunkett has already fired off a solicitor's letter to Channel 4 warning it of dire legal consequences if he dislikes what's on offer.



THE NEOPHILIACS

"Fly-fishing is the new rock 'n' roll." – *Daily Mail Weekend* magazine.

"Women are the new men." – UKTV Style.

"Pottery is the new yoga." – *The Bulletin* (Brussels).

"History is the new gardening." – *New Statesman*.

"Rare coloured Welsh cows are the new black." – *Daily Post* (North Wales).

"Is Africa the new India?" – Commonwealth Business Council website.

"Can it now be said that saving is the new consumer spending?" – *Bloomberg Money*.

STAFF at ITV, still smarting from the £100m cuts imposed since the merger of Carlton and Granada and living in fear of further job losses as a result of Ofcom's halving of the network's commitment to regional programming, were delighted to read a recent interview with Clare Salmon, ITV's marketing director, in the *Daily Telegraph's* motoring supplement.

"I have a mouth-wateringly beautiful pair of shocking pink Gina slingbacks with three inch heels. They are absolutely succulent and I wanted a car to match. So when I went into the Porsche garage on Park Lane, I took the shoes and put them on the counter," she told the paper. "To be perfectly honest, I can't remember how much the car was because I bought it out of my bonus, in cash."

I - S K Y

"IMAGE OF THE DAY: A giant Su Doku puzzle on a hill overlooking the M4 near Bristol publicises Carol Vorderman's Su Doku Live on Sky TV tomorrow."

— Full page picture in the Times.

(While true Sudoku puzzles have only one solution, Sky's giant one had a possible 1,905.)

LIKE teachers desperate to prove they are "down with the kids" by talking about Kylie Minogue in assembly, the last fortnight has seen two men who ought to know better take *Big Brother* as the subject of their sermons.

First into the fray was Channel 4 chief executive Andy Duncan, who told an evangelical Christian group there was a "moral dimension to the programme and contestants who displayed the greatest humanity — qualities such as honesty and kindness — tended to win through."

On the night he made his speech to the Faithworks group, the housemates were given their new task: to lie to one of their companions who would be forced to spend several hours handling live maggots and performing other equally unpleasant tasks while they enjoyed three days of luxury parties behind his back.

A week later, presenting the Campaign for Racial Equality's "Race in the Media" awards, chairman Trevor Phillips praised the Channel 4 reality show as "a chance for many British people to encounter people from other ethnic groups they would never meet in their own everyday lives," and pointed out that "most encouragingly... they seem completely uninfluenced by issues of race and ethnicity in deciding who they want to chuck out or keep in."

With perfect timing, Phillips made his speech on the very night the housemates, who had split completely along racial lines, had their most furious argument yet, with the ringleader of the white gang (who have commandeered the house's living room) telling one of the black group (who confine themselves to the kitchen) that her afro hair was "a fucking wig", she "smelt of dogshit" and that "you've got a chip on your shoulder, people like you always do." Evicted last week, however, white Saskia clarified her position on the matter — her objection to the other housemates was "not about colour", it was simply that they were "a bunch of bloody monkeys".

GLASTONBURY 2005

REGULAR Glastonbury-goers talk of Glastonbury "moments" — halcyon happenings when sunshine, pear cider and recreational drugs combine to produce favourable delusions like "£125 for a ticket is really worth it".

But this year's Glastonbury promised a pre-planned moment. At 4pm on the Saturday, Bob Geldof took to the Pyramid stage, telling everyone to hold hands and shout "Make Poverty History". These sentiments received warm applause and appreciative write-ups: "Glastonbury stops for a big Moment," said the *Guardian*, adding that "all performances were simultaneously stopped to allow festival-goers scattered around the vast site to take part in the hand-holding."

But as ever at Glastonbury, the reports and reality bore little resemblance. While "all performances were simultaneously stopped", over in the Acoustic Tent Chas and Dave were whipping up a storm. No one was going to interrupt a rollicking live rendition of *Snooker Loopy* to beat chests and hold hands — so the pre-planned moment simply did not happen, but no one mentioned it in their coverage.

Another thing that went unmentioned in the Pilton quagmire was that huge numbers of plastic bags had blocked Worthy Farm's otherwise ample drains. As it happened, every entrant had been given a plastic bag of goodies by *Q Magazine*, which had a formidable presence. The *Guardian*, another sponsor, was also giving out plastic bags. Yet even though there was a *Daily Q* produced on site and flocks of *Guardianistas* on junkets everywhere, the contribution of their own field marketing to the carnage did not get a mention.

• DUMB BRITAIN •

- *The Weakest Link*, BBC2
- **Anne Robinson:** The M27 links Southampton with which other south coast city?
- **Contestant:** Leeds.
- *Radio Galaxy*, Sheffield
- **Presenter:** What is the capital of Ethiopia?
- **Contestant:** Bangladesh.
- *Dave Bussey show*, Radio Lincolnshire
- **Bussey:** Name the Danish man who wrote such fairy tales as *Thumbelina* and *The Ugly Duckling*.
- **Contestant (after long pause):** Would it be Enid Blyton?
- *The Big Call*, Scottish TV
- **Neil Fox:** Which team won in the 2005 Euro Women's football final?
- **Contestant:** Australia.
- **NF:** How do you know?
- **Contestant:** Because I watched it on television.
- **NF:** Well, it was Germany.



AD NAUSEAM

WHEN advertisers sign up celebrities for endorsements they run the risk that the celebrities might bring other, less complimentary associations.

Jamie Oliver's wife shopping at Waitrose, Vic Reeves fronting a car insurance ad before being banned for drink-driving and Paul Kaye calling himself a "c**t" for his adverts with Woolworths all spring to mind.

So when Travelex announced that it had signed up England rugby star Jonny Wilkinson for its first ever TV advertising this summer, at a time when his fitness was in doubt and on the eve of a testing Lions tour, several eyebrows were raised — especially as the Travelex campaign was strapped "Travelex hate to be beaten too", to go with a pair of adverts showing Wilkinson being ultra-competitive against a man skimming stones and a dog chasing a stick.

Fate duly stepped in: the Lions have been comprehensively beaten, however much Wilkinson may hate it, and Travelex's totem is, once again, injured.

AFTER Brazil (*Eye* 1115) and Bulgaria (1134), yet another country emerges where HSBC, "The World's Local Bank", appears to have a blind spot.

A reader who went to the Fresh Start Emigration Show at the Excel centre in London's Docklands last month was looking to emigrate to South Africa, and so consulted HSBC, an exhibitor. He was assured that his account would be transferred smoothly because the bank had associate status with banks there. So far, so globally local — until his HSBC branch in Barnet told him its tentacles did not stretch as far as South Africa at all. How long before the ASA pulls the plug on a misleading campaign?

MORE sterling work from the Virgin PR department last week, with the announcement that Virgin had block-booked an entire ad break during the first episode on ITV2 of Richard Branson's risible reality show, *Rebel Billionaire: Branson's Quest for the Best*.

The intention is to show all of Virgin's current ads back to back. The worry should be that Virgin's ads, through Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe, will show up the TV show for the tubercular turkey that it is.

When it began in the US last year, *Rebel Billionaire* averaged five million viewers, a dire performance for a programme on one of the big four US networks. *The Apprentice*, the Donald Trump show that Branson copied, averaged 16 million. The only saving grace for Branson's vanity project will be that with so few viewers, the PR coup of buying a whole break won't have cost much.

"However, the new bill only covers civil unions, rather than religious ones, meaning no clergy would have to perform sex-sex ceremonies unless they wanted to."

Guardian Unlimited

Live8balls

"Dear Traveller: You can't have failed to notice that it's Live8 this weekend. Sir Bob has put together 10 concerts featuring 100 artists to raise awareness about Africa, which are expected to be watched by a global audience of more than two billion. We're all for raising awareness too, which is why we're letting you know about the very best travel deals available on the Internet. The difference is, we do it every week." — Email circular from cheapflights.co.uk.

SUPERMODELS

K E R B E R



Down on the Farm

ANYONE who wonders why this column refers to our farming supremo Mrs Beckett as Rosa Klebb might reflect on a recent incident in her office off Millbank.

An appointment had been made to see her by Nick Somerfield, a senior member of the Farming Union of Wales. When he was shown into her office, Rosa was at her desk looking at some papers. She did not acknowledge his presence, until he awkwardly broke the silence by explaining that he wanted to make sure she was aware of the views of Welsh farmers. Without raising her eyes, Rosa icily observed that if she wanted to know the views of farmers, she would ask her officials at Defra. After a shocked pause, realising the interview for which had travelled 200 miles up to London was at an end, Somerfield left the room and set off back to Wales.

If this scene conveys the open contempt Labour farming ministers show towards those who work in the industry whose interests they are meant to represent, it also reflects something of why farming lies at the centre of the current massive row between Britain and France over the future of the EU.

The Beloved Leader and his colleagues deeply resent the fact that 40 percent of the EU budget goes to subsidising just one industry, agriculture, which is one reason they are so contemptuous towards the farmers. But the reason for this of course lies in sins of 40 years ago, which are now



"Maybe this town ain't big enough for the both of us, but that doesn't justify building fifty thousand new homes in the next three years"

finally catching up with them all.

It is all very well for Chirac to demand an end to the £3bn a year UK rebate. But the rebate only became necessary in the first place because of the peculiar way in which France had designed the common agricultural policy (CAP) specifically to protect French agriculture, by ensuring that it gave more money to her farmers than any others.

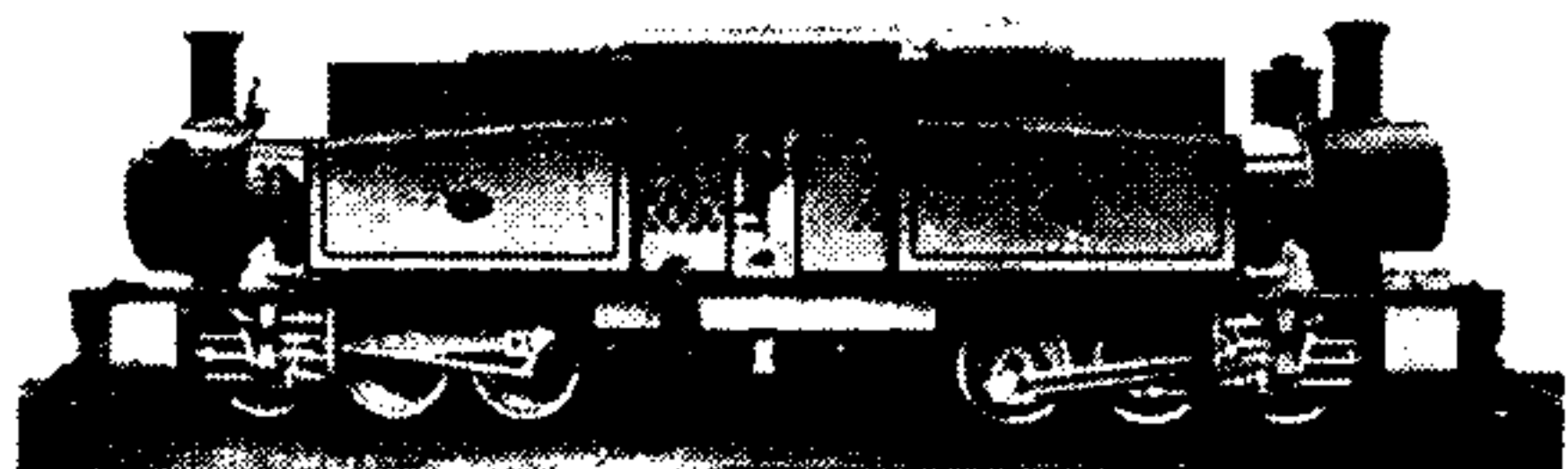
If Chirac gets his way in scrapping the rebate, Britain, because she has many fewer farmers, ends up becoming the biggest single net contributor to the budget. So Blair naturally replies that he will only agree to give up the rebate if there is a

wholesale reform of the CAP which would end up with France losing her position as easily the biggest recipient of farm subsidies. Since that has always been the whole purpose of the CAP, Chirac cannot possibly agree. He points out that Blair himself agreed in 2002 to a financial deal on the CAP which is set in stone until 2013, scornfully asking why Blair now wants to go back on a deal to which everyone agreed. Chirac conveniently forgets that exactly the same argument applies to the UK rebate.

Nevertheless, as readers of this column may recall, Mrs T's rebate has been far from an unalloyed blessing. For Britain's farmers it has proved very much a poisoned chalice, because written into the rebate's small print is a provision that if Britain applies for certain Brussels subsidies, she must pay most of them herself.

The treasury is so insistent on maximising the benefit of the rebate that Britain has long kept those demands to a minimum, which means her farmers receive markedly lower subsidies than their French and other competitors. So the UK's farmers are in a no-win situation. If we keep the rebate, they lose. If the CAP were to be scrapped, and nation states were free to fix their own levels of farm subsidy, they would be at the mercy of Gordon Brown, Rosa and a government that hates farmers. Either way they lose. They can only look fondly back to the year when UK farm incomes were in real terms at their highest level in history: 1973, the year we entered the Common Market and the CAP.

'Muckspreader'



SIGNAL FAILURES

AS EVIDENCE of government skulduggery emerges in the high court, Railtrack shareholders have good reason to be indignant. But in their attempt to show that they were conned by the state, they're overlooking one basic problem: how the state was itself conned by Railtrack.

When Railtrack was privatised in 1996, the deal was that it would receive no direct government funding but would rely on track access charges paid by the subsidised train operators. The charges were set by an independent regulator to ensure Railtrack had enough cash pouring in to keep the entire network in the same condition as it was in when Railtrack took over from British Rail. Railtrack charges were the biggest single outlay for train operators and thus accounted for a large slice of operators' subsidies.

Despite this guaranteed cashflow to keep the network up to scratch, Railtrack abandoned established maintenance procedures, used isometric testing to get rid of managers who knew something about engineering, left its maintenance contractors largely unsupervised, and decided rails could last

128 years. Weeds infesting the tracks (blocking the drainage needed to stop the track distorting) showed that Railtrack's money wasn't going where it should have gone, but that didn't stop Railtrack shareholders collecting handsome annual dividends.

Network Rail, which succeeded Railtrack, still has years more work to do to correct the results of Railtrack's brief tenure. As with houses, neglecting maintenance of railways costs more in the long-run because minor problems become major. But Railtrack never had to live with the consequences of its cost-cutting; instead Network Rail is picking up the tab – using billions of pounds of direct and indirect public cash.

Taxpayers are also forking out huge wads to Virgin Trains (*Eyes passim*): originally Railtrack was meant to compensate Virgin when it couldn't upgrade the west-coast mainline as it had foolishly promised. Taxpayers are also waiting to see the sod-cutting ceremony for the urgent Thameslink 2000 scheme in London, for which Railtrack was given £650m of their cash in 1996.

A central contention in the high court action is that the government rejected rescue plans involving a cash advance or government guarantees for extra Railtrack borrowing. Network Rail has received similar assistance, but to claim this proves the rescue plan was worthwhile is to miss the essential difference between Railtrack and NR: one was run by accountants, the other is run by engineers. Giving Railtrack another chance would have achieved nothing because it was fundamentally inept.

LABOUR's decimation of the railway by stealth continues with news that bureaucrats want the service between Oxford and Bicester Town cut from seven to two round trips a day. They even dictate that the round trips will be completed "between 08:00-09:30 and in the evening between 16:00-17:00".

The morning train should be OK for people to commute from Bicester and Islip to Oxford; but the prescribed "evening" period in the afternoon will ensure nobody working normal office hours can commute on the train, which must leave Oxford by 4.35pm.

These cuts will save insignificant cash. The branch line must still be maintained to passenger standards and a train and crew allocated to the service in the morning peak, when resources are most stretched. But that's not the saving the bureaucrats have in mind. By driving away the passengers first, it will be easier for the "closures manager", now being recruited by the transport department, to axe the line altogether.

The Bicester train's fate shows the government's attitude to railways. Costs must be cut to find the money for the industry's growing bureaucracy and profits, and the easiest way is to force people off trains and into cars (where they pay more in taxes). A fine example for Blair to hold up as he tries to get G8 leaders to take global warming seriously.

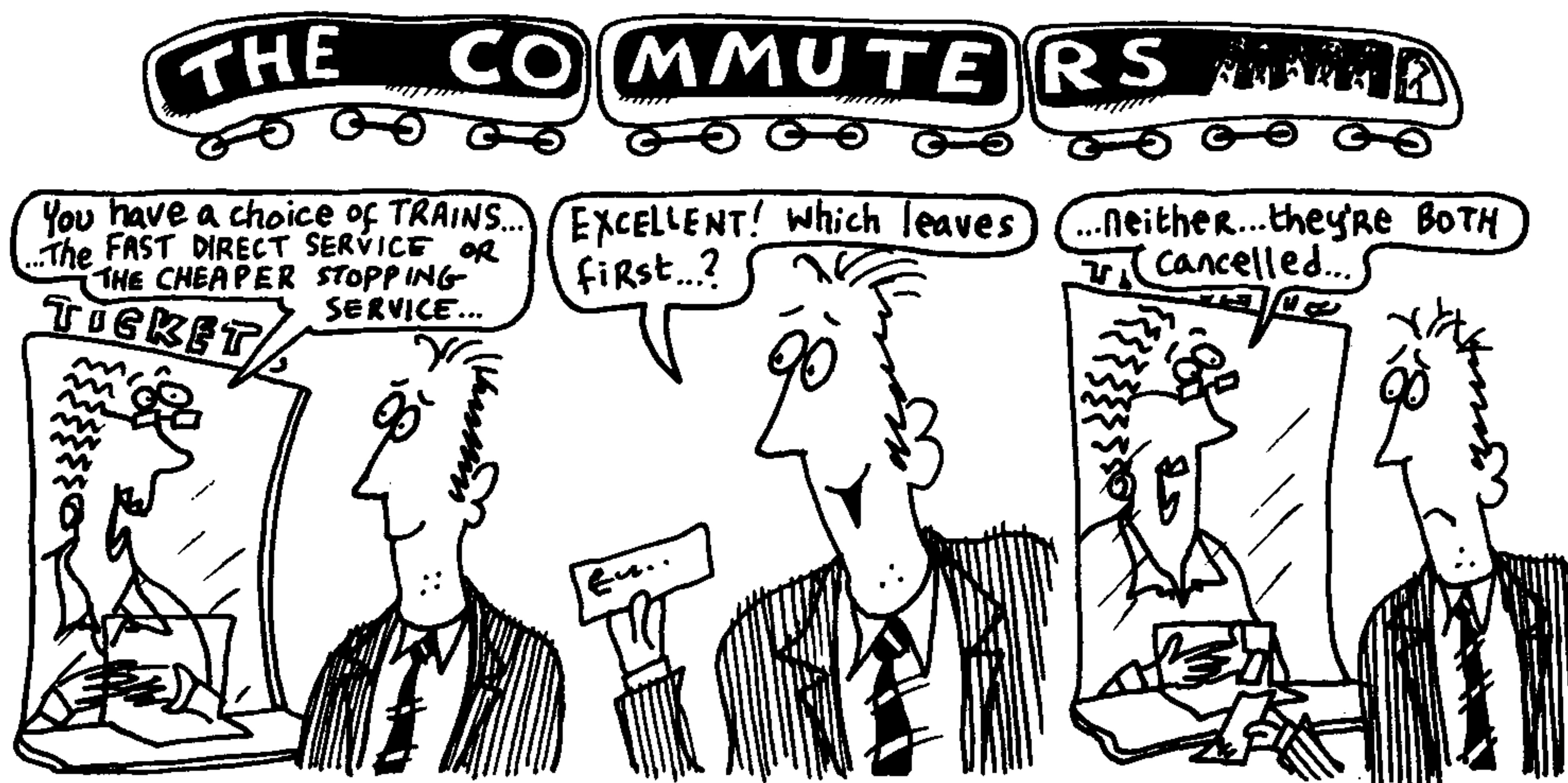
WHY IS transport secretary Alistair Darling a Labour MP when his indifference to poverty makes him a natural Tory like his great uncle Sir William Darling (a post-war Edinburgh Tory MP)?

He has now blocked a tram project designed to regenerate deprived Liverpool suburbs. Liverpool is one of western Europe's poorest cities, but under Darling it has lost its direct trains to dozens of towns, cities and airports (*Eye 1115*). Modern trams would do more for its long-term image and prosperity than the superficial European city of culture 2008 tag, which Labour is supporting.

Darling's reason for scrapping the tram scheme was rising costs, which are inevitable as UK and global demand inflate construction-industry costs. Merseyside officials still hope to rescue the scheme, but costs rise with every week of delay. Officials in Manchester and Leeds were just as optimistic last year when Darling blocked their new tram lines, still shelved.

Only one British city now has a tram scheme in the pipeline: Edinburgh. It's far more prosperous than Liverpool – and it happens to include Darling's constituency.

'Dr B Ching'



■ ROTTEN BOROUGH ■

LOWEST OF THE LOW

INSPECTOR Knacker is taking a close interest in how one Tarsem Paul came to be elected a Conservative member of Bedfordshire county council on 5 May.

Paul beat his Lib Dem opponent Lynda Aylett-Green in Bedford's De Parys ward by just 96 votes. He secured 1,101 votes, Aylett-Green 1,005. Yet Paul "won" with the help of votes he stole from people living in old folks' homes.

Before the election Noelle Franklin discovered that the proxy vote of her 77-year-old mother, Louise Garrett, who suffers from Alzheimer's, had been assigned to Robert Rigby, a Tory borough councillor who was unknown to them. Rigby, the local Conservative election agent, has confirmed that he signed the proxy form on behalf of Mrs Garrett after Paul told him it was obtained "fairly and properly".

Mrs Franklin complained before 5 May to the electoral registration officer. Her mother's proxy vote was cancelled and an investigation, still ongoing, into how it was obtained by Paul was launched. Mrs Franklin told the *Bedfordshire on Sunday* newspaper that "anyone speaking to my mother would know within seconds that she has Alzheimer's as she cannot put a sensible sentence together. What concerns me is how many other people this has happened to."

The answer is: dozens for sure and possibly up to up 200 in all. At Bunyan Lodge, a psychiatric residential home, five residents were "persuaded" by Paul to sign votes over to relations of Conservative party workers.

The visitors book records that Paul went to the home on 25 March and again on 3, 5, 16 and 19 April. The longest of these visits lasted 10 minutes, the shortest two. Two of the voters were questioned later and could not recall being visited.

At Hepworth House, a retirement home, 10 residents were registered as having requested proxy votes, but none knew the person given the vote on their behalf. At Lloyd Lodge, another care home in the ward, the manager confirmed that "someone", now known to be Tarsem Paul, had collected proxy votes, having asked only for residents' signatures with the rest of the form left blank.

One relative of a woman whose vote was stolen said: "My mother has mild dementia. Somebody came in and took her vote away. It is disgusting." Although there is no law against dementia sufferers voting, the electoral commission has described the practice of gathering votes from them as "immoral".

When *Private Eye* invited Cllr Paul to explain his actions, he put the phone down. When we called back 10 seconds later, his wife answered and said her husband was out. He has failed to return calls to his mobile and emails.

SITH AMENDMENT

THE PROUD holder of the *Eye*'s "Tory Bigot of the Year" award 2004 found himself up before the Standards Board for England's (SBE) adjudication panel last month.

Eye 1113 reported that Stowmarket town councillor Keith Myers-Hewitt upset a librarian by exclaiming "Have aliens landed, or is it an invasion of darkies?" after seeing some black men using computers at the town's library. At the time Cllr Myers-Hewitt – who was elected to Suffolk county council in May this year – was chairman of Bury St Edmunds Conservative Association.

Cllr Myers-Hewitt, 74, told the panel the library had been crowded. He hadn't mentioned "darkies" but rather "people from the dark side" – an amusing, non-racist reference to "the Force" in the *Star Wars* films. Not referring to anyone in particular, said Cllr Myers-Hewitt, "I turned to [my wife] and said 'Bloomin' 'eck Beryl, are we being invaded by aliens – people from the dark side?'"

How could anyone possibly take offence at that? The panel will deliver its verdict later this month. Possible penalties include suspension or disqualification as a councillor.

● **CLLR Myers-Hewitt might take heart from the experience of last year's "Tory Bigot" runner-up, Neville "Fuck the Irish" Sanders, former leader of Peterborough city council (*Eyes passim*). Last month the high court reduced his two-year ban on holding public office, imposed by the adjudication panel in 2004 for saying disobliging things about the Irish, to a temporary suspension. Mr Justice Wilkie ruled that, to paraphrase somewhat, electors in Vile Nev's ward had been perfectly aware what a revolting old boor he was, and had re-elected him anyway, so it had been presumptuous of the standards board to go against The People's will. [That's enough bigots – Ed.]**

HOUSING CORPSE

THE credibility of the Housing Corporation, the watchdog that regulates Britain's housing associations, is on the line after a farcical whitewash of the Sunderland Housing Group (SHG), the biggest landlord in the north-east.

Concern about SHG began on the day Sunderland's 36,500 council houses were transferred to it in 2001 for a knockdown £6,273 per property. The man who masterminded the transfer, city council housing director Peter Walls, became chief executive of SHG at double his old salary (*Eye* 1118).

Since SHG took over it has become much harder for families to find affordable homes in Sunderland as the "not for profit" SHG has thrown its energy into building speculative luxury flats while demolishing existing estates without building enough new homes to replace them (100 new homes built so far, but 6,200 existing ones empty, demolished or sold).

Earlier this year it was revealed that 19,000

people were on the waiting list for new homes, while SHG was spending £42m on luxury developments. "Right to buy" home owners left behind on half-demolished estates find their house values plummet as vandals and yobs move in on formerly respectable neighbourhoods.

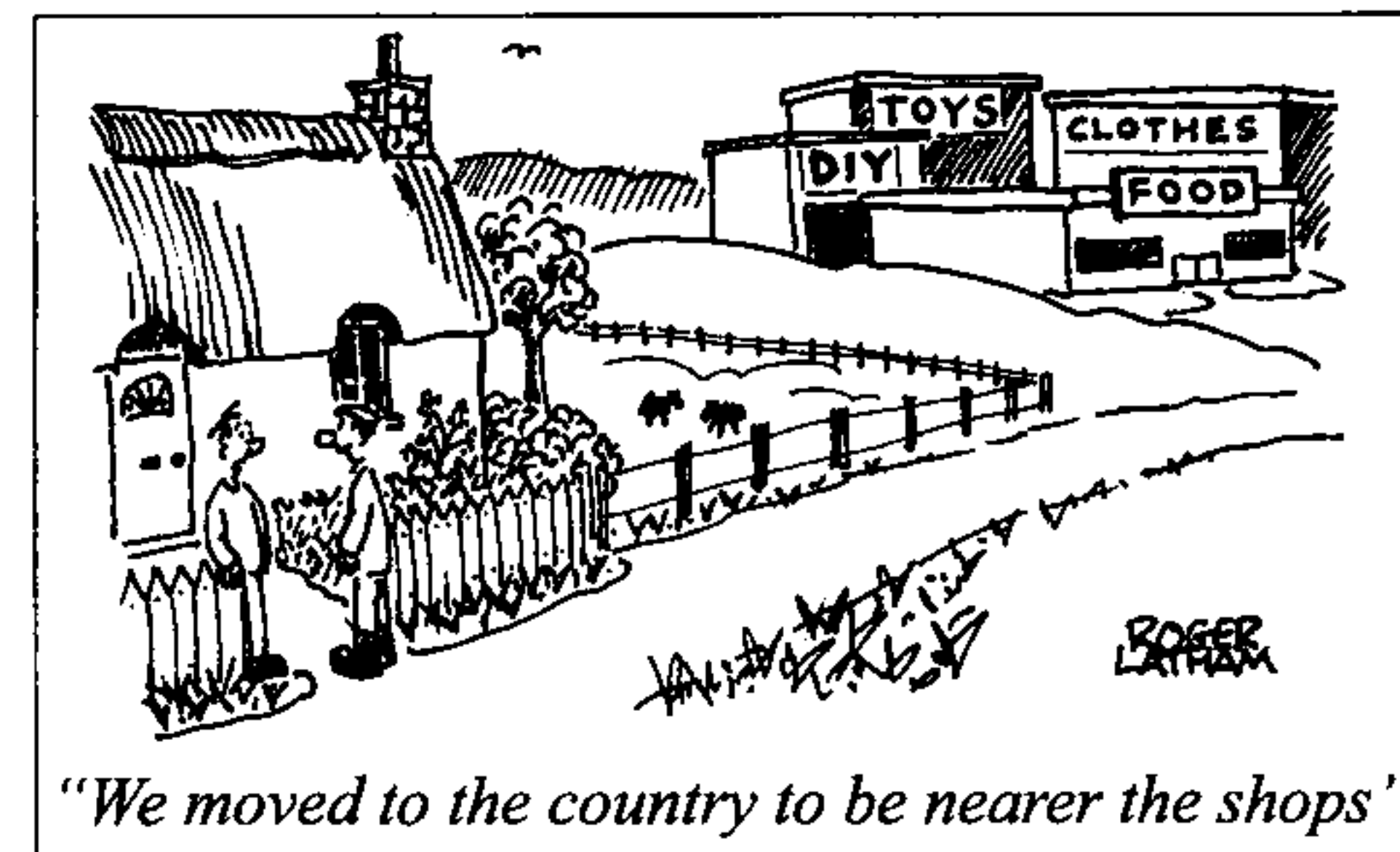
The only area in which SHG has a good record is on refurbishing houses up to and beyond the government's "decent homes standard" – because it has received the avalanche of government cash which becomes available after councils divest themselves of their housing stock, but which is not available to those councils which decide to retain control. Other allegations about SHG detailed on a well-informed website (www.dadsplace.co.uk) include bullying, nepotism and dubious practices in the awarding of contracts.

SHG was cockahoop, therefore, when an "independent reviewers" report supposedly commissioned by the Housing Corporation concluded, according to a press release, that various "allegations" against SHG were "unsubstantiated". But SHG-watchers are none the wiser, as the Housing Corporation has refused to publish the report.

Conservative councillor Michael Arnott asked the corporation a number of questions, three of which are reproduced here, with the answers:

Who appointed the independent reviewers and how were they chosen? "The reviewers were appointed by Sunderland Housing Group." *Are you in a position to identify the organisations concerned?* "No. This is a matter between Sunderland Housing Group and the organisations concerned." *Who paid for the reports?* "Sunderland Housing Group."

So the organisation under investigation chooses who will investigate it and pays for the report, the results of which are not published in any detail. So much for robust independent scrutiny!



LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELDS

A MERRY-GO-ROUND of land deals in the Sussex town of Rye looks likely to see one new school built on the playing fields of another to make way for a new health centre and a big Tesco.

Thomas Peacocke Community School has already been consolidated on to one site, leaving its former lower school site empty. A scheme for a badly-needed new GP surgery on the spare land was rejected by planners earlier this year, prompting protests by GPs and patients. However, last month MP Michael Foster learned from Railtrack (of all places) that Tesco lawyers had been asking questions about access to the land and thus discovered that East Sussex county council was in talks with the supermarket giant over selling the land for a superstore.

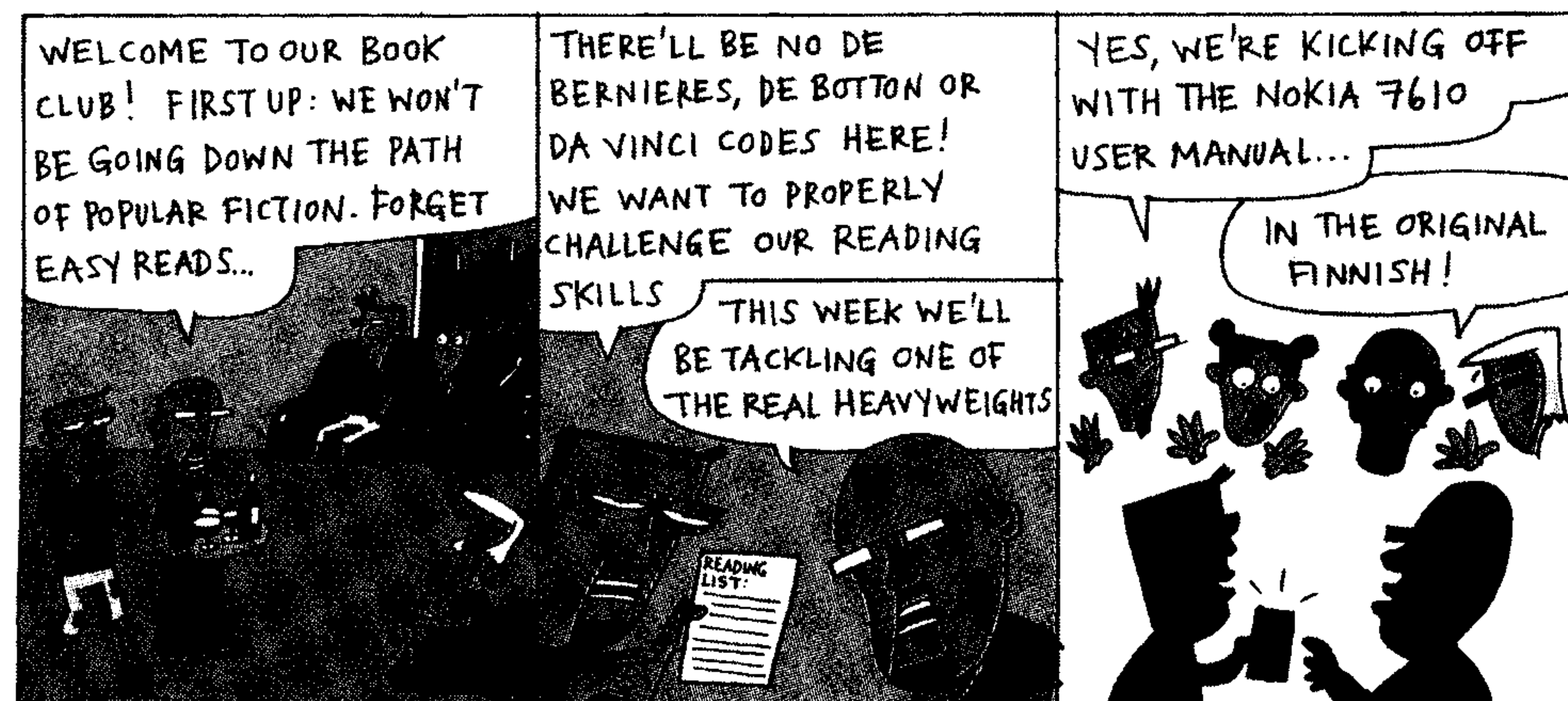
Meanwhile, two local primary schools, Freda Gardham School and Tilling Green School, are to be replaced with one big new primary school, to be crammed on to the remaining playing fields at the main Thomas Peacocke site.

A consultation on the primary school closures noted that: "The loss of any playing fields, co-sharing of playing field and games facilities were identified as a key concern."

The council is making noises about one of those primary school sites then being available for the health service, and there is no guarantee that the last school site will be kept in public hands, especially if it can be flogged for a quick buck. Meanwhile primary and secondary pupils, once spread across four schools with ample outdoor space, will have to share what grass there is at the one remaining site.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER



NOOKS and CORNERS

CHAIRMAN Mao had his Cultural Revolution which destroyed ancient temples and peasant houses alike. Romania's Ceausescu called it "systemization" when he wiped out traditional villages and removed inconvenient churches. And we have John Prescott's Pathfinder scheme: £500m to pull down 400,000 homes – mostly pre-1919 terraces – to stimulate "housing market renewal" in deprived areas.

This return to the planned urban terrorism of the 1960s has rightly provoked massive hostility as Pathfinder allows thuggish local authorities to carry on with the policies that failed 40 years ago.

Liverpool, for instance, throwing its weight around as European City of Culture in 2008, wants to demolish lots of old houses, even though for the first time in decades property values are rising. Solid, decent red-brick late Victorian terraces in Bootle are going, and the so-called Welsh streets of Toxteth, with their small terraced cottages, are threatened too. Residents face eviction or displacement through compulsory purchase: so much for Prescott's claim that "our guiding principle is that people must come first".

But it is not just old terraced housing that is threatened. Prescott's vision for the systematisation of Britain and concreting over the South-East also targets leafy, low-density suburbs thanks to a discreet rewriting of planning guidelines. Some-

how the gardens of existing houses have been classified as "brownfield sites" and thus made ideal for regeneration and development. Planning guidance now aims to "maximise the re-use of previously developed land" which is now defined as "all of the land within the curtilage of the site." That means mature gardens: land that has never been built on.

Never mind that the low-density suburb with lots of trees and green space makes ecological sense. Local authorities are now finding it hard to resist the development pressure to replace houses and to fill their inefficient gardens with blocks of flats.

Great Musters, a handsome villa in Melton Road, Edwalton, outside Nottingham, with its large and (once) fine garden, is a case in point. In 2004 the house and adjoining property were bought by Kewmoor Ltd, of Chiswick, which proposed to demolish both and build two three-storey blocks containing 16 flats and an underground car-park across the combined site. This public-spirited firm also gently suggested to

neighbours that they, too, might like to sell up.

The proposal provoked strong opposition and Rushcliffe borough council turned the application down because it contravened the local plan. The developer has gone to appeal and the case will be heard in Bristol later this year. Meanwhile Great Musters remains vulnerable. After leaving it empty for six months, the developer has installed some rather, um, disrespectful tenants and has chopped down a large tree in the garden.

Great Musters is no ordinary suburban house. Originally built in about 1880, it was enlarged and transformed into an Italianate villa in 1929 by F.W.C. Gregory, the head of the Nottingham school of architecture and an associate of Cecil Howitt, architect of Nottingham Council House. It was also then given high quality Classical interiors.

With the support of SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Twentieth Century Society, neighbours applied to have Great Musters listed, at grade II, but the application was turned down by the Department of Culcha. The applicants appealed,

but the DCMS has now confirmed that the building is not of "architectural significance" because the English Heritage inspector reported that it is "not innovative for the period".

This is a ridiculous judgement. Buildings are not listed solely for being progressive in design but also for quality, and the Mediterranean style of Great Musters was

as typical of c.1930 as Art Deco or the Modernistic.

So how can Great Musters and thousands of decent, solid houses in similar situations be protected from demolition? The only mechanism other than listing is to declare a conservation area, but that is a local matter and it has little clout when government policy is actively encouraging higher-density development.

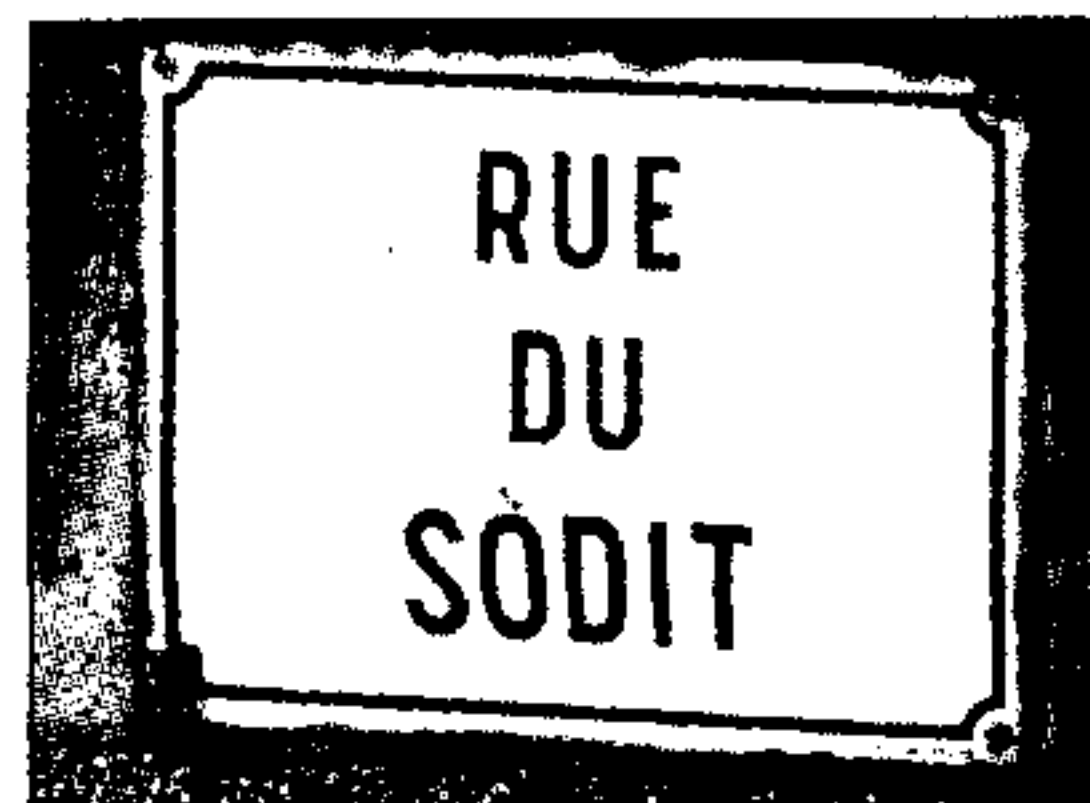
It has been suggested that Prescott deceitfully fiddled the rules so that large mature gardens are defined as "previously developed land" to enable the government to meet its target of 60 percent of development on brownfield sites. Whether that is true or not he remains determined on a systematisation of England which will sweep away the surviving ordinary terraces that give character to Northern cities and build over the leafy suburbs so enjoyed by the middle classes he hates.

'Piloti'



I-SPY

Cap Gris
Nez, France
(Submitted by
George Pitman)



Zur Haddasa,
Israel
(Submitted
by Rochelle
Mendelson)

£10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs)

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

IN THE past few weeks three legal decisions have caused mayhem in the classical music world – threatening penury for arts organisations that barely survive on the near side of solvency as it is.

As reported in *Eye*

1133, the appeal court ruled against independent record label Hyperion, which had been trying to argue that someone who edits an old musical manuscript makes no creative contribution to it and is therefore not entitled to claim recording royalties on top of his editing fee.

Academic Dr Lionel Sawkins claimed his work producing "performing editions" of several 18th century pieces gave him copyright in the works. To the surprise of many in the industry, their lordships agreed and Hyperion faces legal costs of up to £1m. Although Dr Sawkins' winnings themselves were relatively small, his case was fought by the *Eye*'s old friends Carter Fuck on a conditional fee agreement which sent costs skywards.

The fall-out from this is now becoming clear, as artists like Martin Roscoe have been told there's no money to go ahead with agreed projects and Hyperion's award-winning series of rare piano concertos has been suspended.

Hyperion director Simon Perry says the firm has received hundreds of letters and emails from people asking how they can help. Donations from music fans have already begun to arrive and Perry has promised that all money coming in to their legal costs appeal fund will be put towards resurrecting the recording projects that have been postponed or cancelled. Donations can be made online via www.hyperion-records.co.uk or by writing to Hyperion Appeal Fund, PO Box 25, London SE9 1AX.

Meanwhile Longborough Festival Opera has lost a case in which the VAT authorities claimed that a guarantee against budget shortfalls made personally by the festival's chairman, Martin Graham, meant that he stood to make a "profit" from the season, undermining the opera's charitable status and rendering it liable for £100,000 back-dated VAT. It's an absurd decision, with the result that from now on, no trustee of an arts organisation dare offer to bail it out in the event of trouble.

As if all this weren't enough, another charities case, successfully brought by the Inland Revenue, has thrown into doubt the viability of the gift-aid schemes that almost every arts organisations relies on to maximise the value of donations.

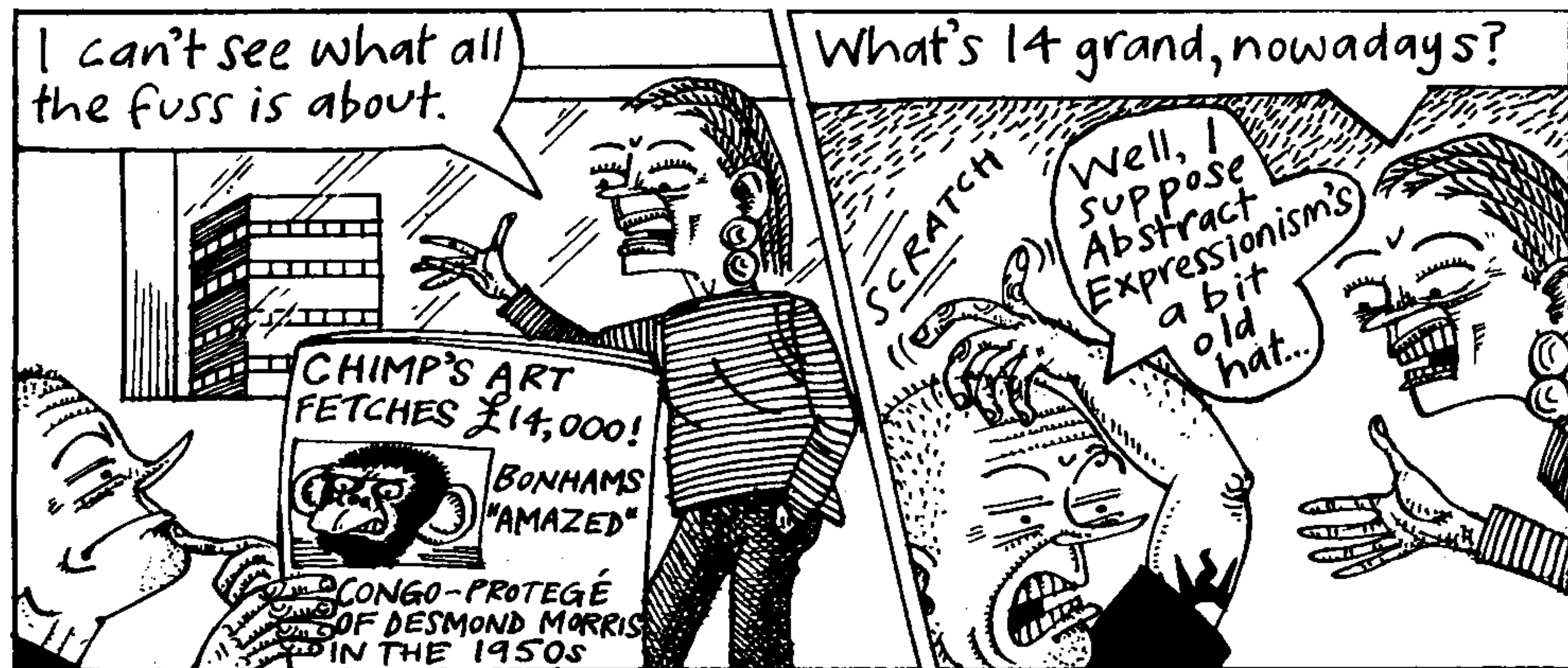
These cases raise a simple question: do we want a serious artistic life in this country or not? If the answer is yes, it's time for the government to step in with a measure of security from unexpected, ill-explained attack by the Revenue and VAT authorities and from predatory lawyers. With yet another VAT case currently hanging over the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the moment has surely come.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'



YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



Letters

Private Eye

Cherie on top?

Sir,

I read your item about Cherie Blair's intended visit to Malaysia to help her billionaire friend Francis Yeoh open his new shop and can now reveal to you, exclusively, why the PM's wife ducked out of her little jaunt.

Five weeks ago (3 June) Mr Yeoh's Wessex Water company dumped gallons of disgusting gunge into the ground-floor bathroom of my little Dorset cottage. It later transpired that the village sewer hadn't been maintained properly for years and had blocked up with tree roots. The reason was that Wessex Water's previous owner, Enron, had sacked most of the workers who dealt with this kind of rural emergency.

Wessex Water's immediate response – hastily amended after an abusive campaign in the local papers – was to offer an urgent review of the trouble in three months' time. On 16 June I wrote to Mrs Blair at 10 Downing Street inviting her to take advantage of her freebie and scold Mr Yeoh (motto: "World Class Products at Third World Prices") into giving the chairman of this "wretched water company" a good bollocking.

Clearly, our gracious First Lady had no stomach for talking a load of shit to such an important fellow and decided to make a run for it. Or should I have offered her a fee?

Yours wanly,
PETER DUNN,

Bridport.

Putting the boot in

Sir,

Regarding Remote Controller's somewhat tetchy review of the BBC's coverage of the women's European football. Apart from the inclusion in the commentary of the now obligatory (for women's sport) screeching summariser of the bleeding obvious, I didn't think it was any worse or better than its blokes' counterpart.

One thing your reviewer did omit to mention was the fact that, once England had been dumped out of the competition (surprisingly, not on penalties, not by the Germans, nor even by a scheming continental referee), the BBC imposed a black-out on its TV coverage and whatever the equivalent is on its Radio 5 coverage, right up until the, admittedly execrable, final.

The producers were at their most righteously indignant when I queried this, saying: "We do not decide our sports scheduling on the gender [sic] of the competitors." What is the criterion, then – narrow nationalism? I think we should be told.

GLYN POWELL,

Highcliffe, Dorset.

I SAY JEEVES, I BELIEVE GUSSY AND AUNT AGATHA ARE MEMBERS OF THE SECRET ORDER OF THE



The Da Vinci Code Of The Woosters

To the point

Sir,

The article Police 5 (Eye 1135) was a little unfair on my colleagues in Dyfed-Powys police at Aberystwyth. Allow me to right a wrong.

1) Many officers like to stay to see the end of a case. It is seeing to a conclusion often months of hard work. The official line from above is that we are supposed to leave after giving our evidence – the "bean counters" want us back out gathering more statistics. Besides which no one ever tells us the court result so we can't even inform our witnesses.

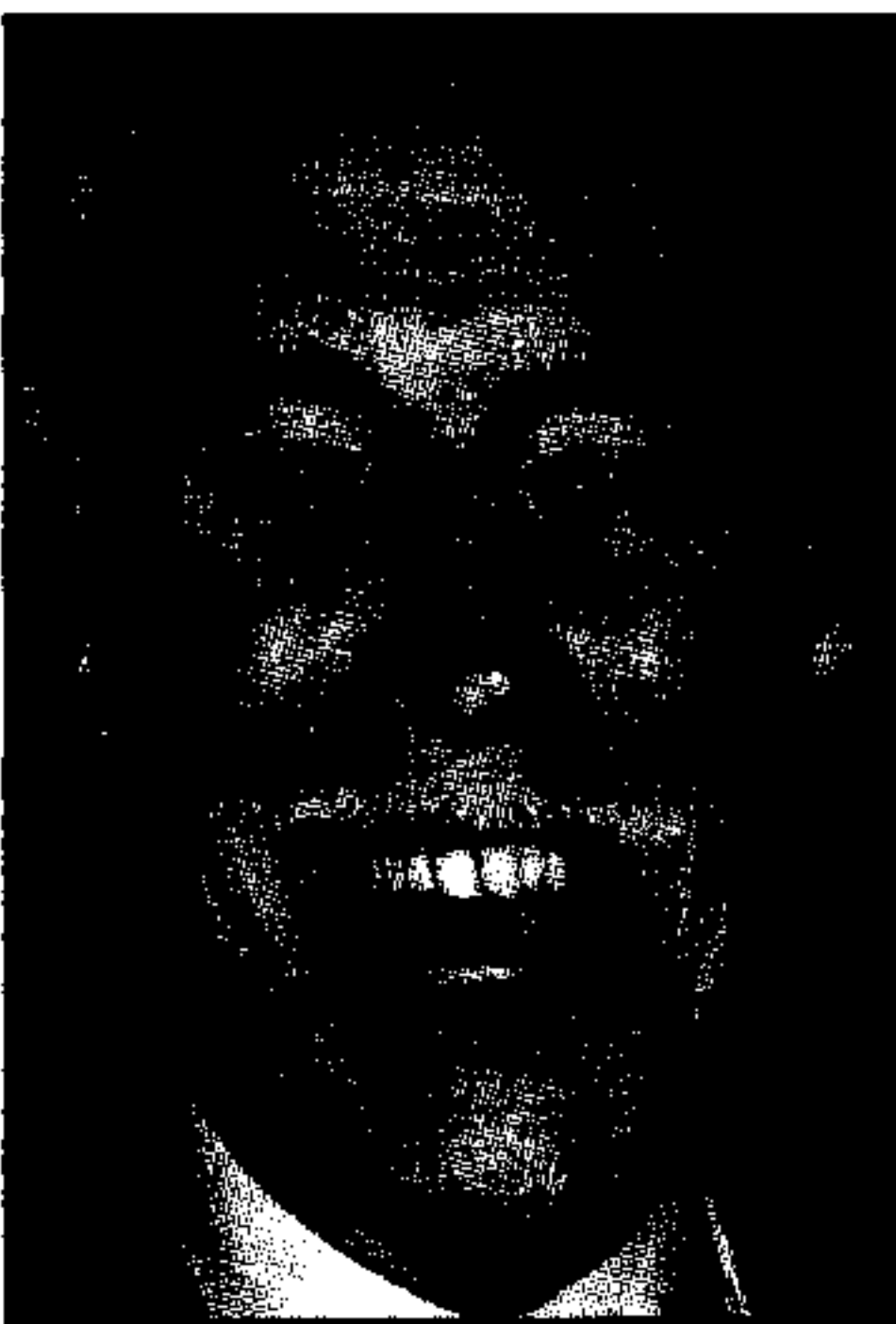
2) Possession of a lock knife is an offence per se, whether it is one inch or 20 inches. Mr Browning can have a knife for work, just one that doesn't lock into position. He can have a folding penknife or a kitchen knife, but the law has decreed that flick knives, lock knives, gravity knives and the like are illegal. Mr Browning can't have a good reason for having one and should have been found guilty. There has been no waste of taxpayers' money.

There was therefore no conspiracy to prosecute Mr Browning. You are getting as paranoid about our ways as the G8 protestors I have been dealing with in Sheffield. They were convinced we were tracking their mobile phones and had secret databases of protestors! We are not that organised – honest!

Yours, watching you,
PC KNACKER,

Sheffield.

Lookalike



Viking



Forsyth

Sir,

This recently-published photograph of a Viking mask bears an uncanny resemblance to Bruce Forsyth, the well-known entertainer and game show host. I wonder if he might be able to claim direct descent – and, if so, Bruce's name might have originally been "Thorsyth"?

By thunder, I think we should be told!

Yours faithfully,
JOHN ANDREWS,

Glasgow.

Of the 21,000, there were just eight arrests – four for drink-related offences, three on minor public order offences and one for assaulting a police officer, leaving both police and English Heritage happy.

Western Daily Press

Sent to Coventry

Sir,

Re HP Sauce, Eye 1135. The Warwick agreement was not hammered out "in the town of the same name" but in the university of the same name. The University of Warwick is situated in Coventry and Warwickshire and its name was suggested by the Bishop of Coventry to replace the less snappy but geographically accurate name of the University of Mid-Warwickshire.

Regards,
PROF. DAVID A. HODGSON,

University of Warwick, Coventry.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Have you got something to wrap my used gum in, Darren? I don't want to just spit it onto the pavement"

Pain killer

Sir,

Re: In The Back – Ibuprofen. I am a GP working in Tadcaster, part of the Selby & York PCT, with 20 years' experience. When I was training back in the 1970s we were taught that co-proxamol was no more effective than paracetamol, that it was addictive and very dangerous in accidental overdose.

None of these facts has been challenged in the intervening period, and indeed co-proxamol prescribing has been seen by many as a "quality marker". That is, the quality of the doctor is inversely related to the number of scripts for co-proxamol written.

The overriding problem with co-proxamol is its toxicity. A small overdose, accidental or not, can provoke a fatal, abnormal heart rhythm. It is well documented that people tend to keep stocks of their own, and relatives', medication. This can result in potentially lethal quantities of co-proxamol lying in the cupboards of houses up and down the country. Sadly a large number of successful suicides are carried out using co-proxamol that was not prescribed for the victim but for someone they knew.

Another problem associated with co-proxamol is drowsiness, and falling associated with this. Since most doctors have not been issuing co-proxamol as new prescriptions for many years, the majority of patients taking it tend to be elderly, having been started on it years ago and now being addicted to it. They are at risk of fracturing their hips should they fall, and since half of all patients who do this die within a year, this is another very good reason to stop the use of co-proxamol.

Moving on to the Nottingham paper on ibuprofen. This was an observational study. It is of interest and suggests that it might be worth looking further into the relationship between non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and heart disease. What it does not say, however, is that there is a causal relationship between taking ibuprofen and heart disease. There are many confounding factors in this study, not least the difference in the incidence of existing heart disease and diabetes in the two groups.

The interpretation of medical research papers is not easy and not all research papers are of equal merit. Please do not wade in with your size 12s trying to stir up controversy where none exists. Co-proxamol is a bad drug, it always was a bad drug and the ban has been embraced by all the colleagues I have spoken to. Ibuprofen is a good drug, with a good side-effect profile; however, like any drug it has its limitations and problems. No one has suggested that we should alter our prescribing of ibuprofen as a result of the Nottingham paper.

Yours sincerely,
DR MARK HAYES,

Tadcaster Medical Centre.



DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES

Bully for Bercow

Sir,
I think you are being a little harsh on John Bercow MP (Eye 1134). Your article itself said that local party organisers had published the leaflet, and he was just arranging trips for any of his electorate who wanted them like a good MP should.

Yours,
STUART REYNOLDS,

Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

CAP doesn't fit

Sir,
The apparent plausibility of Number Crunching (Eye 1135, p3, 11.5bn euro), amused me. That French farmers receive more subsidy in total than their English colleagues should not be a surprise.

Although the population and GDP of France are roughly the same as the UK, France is more than twice the size, has nearly twice the area of farmland and more than twice as many farms. France has the largest area of farmland of any EU state (pre-expansion). The real surprise would be if their share of the CAP was not substantially more than ours.

Over-simple statements like Number Crunching only encourage them by obscuring the facts.

I expect a better class of cynicism from the Eye.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH S. ANGUS,

Slough.

MICHAEL EAVIS
THE MAN BEHIND
GLASTONBURY

My Perfect Weekend: page 3

COME ON IN
THE WATER'S
LOVELY

Active: page 13

Grauniad

Food for thought

Sir,
There is another way to think about the single farm payment to the rather bleak picture painted in Muckspreader's column (Eye 1134).

Paying farmers bonuses to look after their land and encourage responsible pro-environment practices is good for the long-term future of our country. Exposing Britain to a level playing field would only have the disastrous impacts Muckspreader talks about if we do nothing to prepare for that happening.

Many farmers – especially specialist and organic ones – are already building up loyal customers in Britain, who are prepared to pay for high quality food that hasn't travelled half way round the world. Many more steps can be taken to encourage this. And they would have much more impact in building local markets if air transport in particular was taxed at rates which reflect the damage planes do to the environment through producing gases that it's now accepted are affecting our climate.

Of course this does mean taking on the aviation and tourism industries, but a few years ago it seemed just as daunting to try to wipe out the debt owed by developing countries. Once proper aviation taxes are introduced, imported food would become much less competitive compared to locally produced goods; British apple-growers for example could respond by planting neglected varieties that can be eaten for over half the year, and others could try building markets in preserved fruits.

Yours etc,
MIKE FOX,

Banbury Farm, Merriott.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Tennis is a funny game; unbelievable highs and the lows are just as low..."

JOHN McENROE, BBC1

(D. Green)

"And there's Denton, his head hanging skywards..."

Wimbledon tennis commentator

(Geoff Dennis)

Gary Richardson: What are the dangers of building Murray up?

Gerald Williams: First thing is it's inevitable. The second thing is, it's going to happen anyway...

Radio 4

(David Wason)

"They haven't got a bean to rub together."

FI GLOVER, Radio 4

(Dave Gelly)

"... literally hundreds of millions of poor countries in Africa..."

PETER HAIN, BBC1

(Ernie Todd)

SOLUTIONS

"Lighting Solutions" – lighting department, House of Fraser

"R&G fresh herb solutions" – herbs

"Advance Lifts: Setting the standard in lift solutions" – lifts

"Fabric Display Solutions" – flagpoles

"Infoterra: geographic information solutions" – satellite pictures

"Mount Automotive Solutions" – used car dealer

"Joe Bananas – Festival Survival Solutions" – blanket stall at Glastonbury

All submitted by readers

To hull and back

Sir,
Rotten Boroughs featured a story ("Chalk and Cheese") about Simon Chalk and his plans to build a yacht to rival the famous Teignmouth Electron which you reported was found "floating upside down". Floating it certainly was but the right way up. Eccentric yachtsman Donald Crowhurst, who had entered the boat in the Golden Globe round the world yacht race, had a morbid fear of capsizing and had devised a system to prevent this happening.

In the chaos that marked the departure of Teignmouth Electron it is doubtful if this, like other systems on the boat, actually worked but the yacht was found – sans Crowhurst, floating serenely in the Atlantic and was last heard of rotting away quietly on a West Indies beach. The boat is reputedly haunted – as well it might be following Crowhurst's voyage. He had not, in fact, left the Atlantic, far less gone around the world. The creation of a false log giving the correct astronomical information that he would have observed had he actually followed the correct route is said to be a work of genius. When other competitors dropped out and it became clear that he might actually win the race, the guilt was too much for him and he apparently stepped over the side of his boat to perish in the Atlantic.

So the "terrific publicity" for Teignmouth concerned a boat that left the town (on the last possible allowed day to compete) in scenes of "disorganised chaos" and with so much vital equipment left behind that its sole crewman chose an elaborate deception to make people believe that he was winning a race he had never really taken part in. Unable to carry it off, he chose to die in the ocean with his boat ending up as a pile of scrap on a far-away beach. Great.

Best regards,
MIKE GOULD,

Via email.

HOM SAP



AUSTIN



El-Nashar

DENTAL CARE

Advertisement, Devon Diary

Tanks for the advice

Sir,
Need I, in the interests of pedantry, point out with reference to EyeTV (Eye 1135) that "panzer tank" is tautological? Furthermore, German substantives always have a capital letter: next time use either "Panzer" or "tank".

I beg leave to remain,

Punctiliously yours,
PHILIP WOOLF,

Frankfurt, Germany.

Letter from Baluchistan

from Our Own Correspondent

THERE are odd parts of the world no one much likes but that are hard to ignore. Baluchistan is just such a place: Pakistan's poorest, most violent and least lovely province.



You British never much cared for us; and since you left we have spent much of our time either being bought off by (or occasionally fighting against) our own government. Around 10,000 Baluchis have been killed in such clashes over the years.

But we have never been as important as we are today. Not only do we have vast quantities of natural gas, but we also sit on the frontier with Iran and Afghanistan and America wants to build an oil pipeline from Turkmenistan across our deserts to a new deep-water port in Gwadar.

Our tribes know that now is a good time to strike a bargain. But how to do it? Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, 77-year-old custodian of the Bugti clan and a splendid moustache, began by sabotaging a train during the Raj. He's been a government minister, and he's also spent years in jail as an opponent of the government. In January he took up arms again. The cause, as always, is our gas, which Pakistan has been stealing ever since it was discovered. But the spark was a matter of honour: the rape of a woman doctor at the vast Sui gas-field, in Mr Bugti's domain. "This dastardly event took place on our land, in our society," he intones. "Such deeds are not done here." Besieged by black-bearded Bugti, the gas-field was closed, causing a mini-energy crisis across the country.

The crisis then worsened. On 17 March, 67 people were killed in Dera Bugti in a fight between Bugti tribesmen and government troops – most when the government shelled a Hindu ghetto inside the town in a bid to kill the talismanic Mr Bugti. "They died," he said, "without a frown on their faces, without shedding one tear." A parliamentary commission in Islamabad has since proposed that the government offer us concessions – more gas money and so on – which may calm things for the moment. But the warning signs for a bloodier uprising are there.

The Americans and their friends in government may think a pipeline to the sea is a grand idea. But to us the port being built at Gwadar is a nightmare come true. It will bring a wave of immigration from Pakistan's desperate urban sprawls, leaving us, with 40 percent of the country's land mass, a minority in our own province. And it could also prove the rallying point for hitherto empty dreams of secession.

Normally the Bugtis are suspicious of everyone, but no one more so than other Baluchis. These divisions are old and just how folks on the outside like it. Even separately we are fairly difficult customers. The Marri and other clans are already in more or less open revolt. Over the past five years, several hundred soldiers and civil servants have been killed by their assassins. If Mr Bugti lent it his weight, this insurgency could spiral.

Our rowdy tribesmen are already giving the US superpower grief. At one point, the Americans even suspected we were under the cloak of Osama Bin Laden. This was rubbish. Our hostility is not based on spiritual or religious concerns. We are, after all, a fairly secular lot. But we do not like to be interfered with, be it from the US, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or wherever, as we are ready to demonstrate.

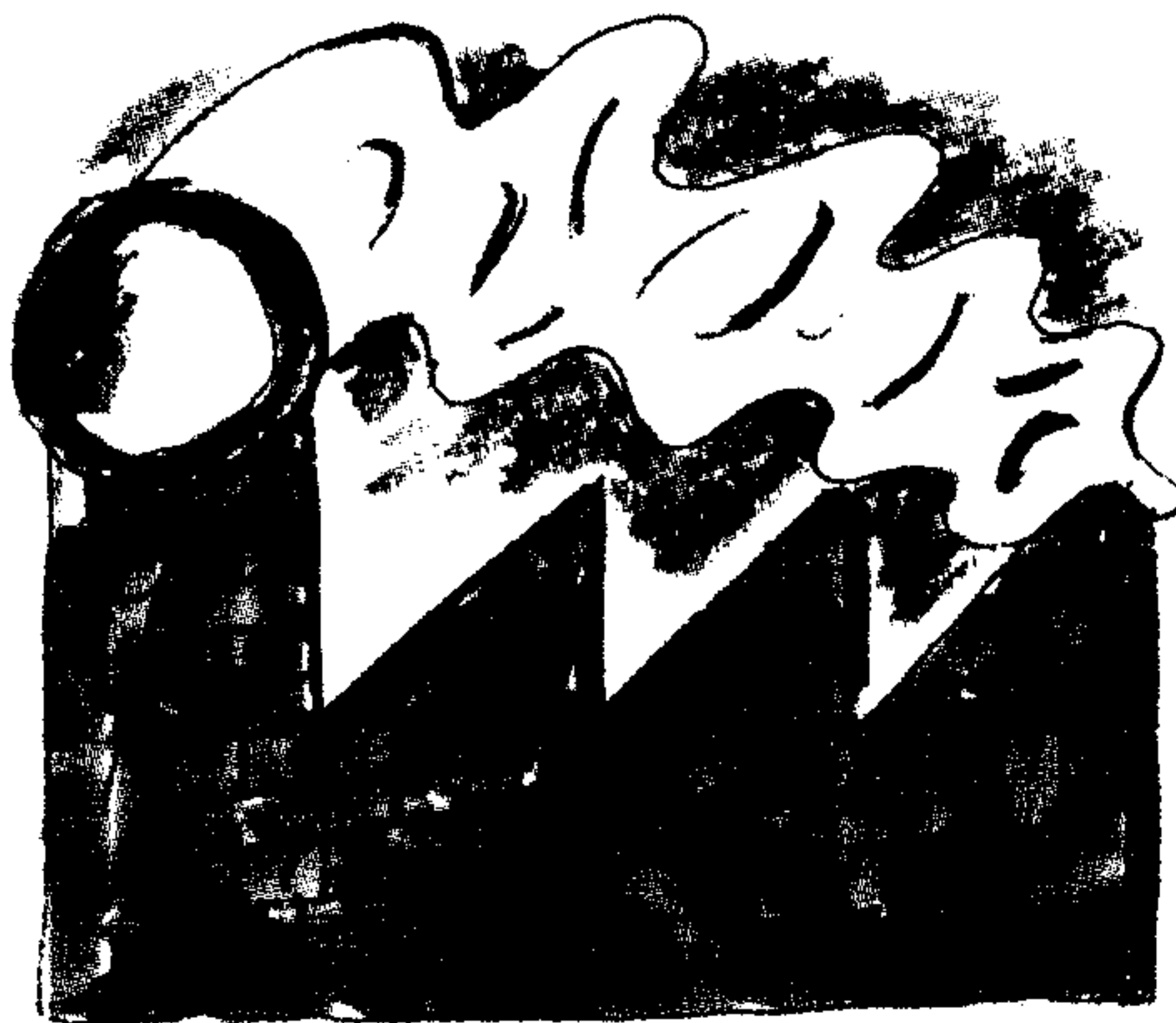
In Dera Bugti is a man, known as Sakka, who is accused by America of shooting down one of their helicopters as it flew south from Afghanistan. Asked whether he was guilty of this crime, Sakka stroked his whiskers. "I can confirm that it was a man, and not God, who brought that helicopter down," he said, as around him a crowd of well-armed tribesmen laughed heartily into their beards.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● "People get through 600,000 condoms a day in this city alone," Mahfooz Alam of the Weavers Movement told reporters in Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), "but only about a quarter of them are actually used for sex. Ever since the government started giving them away free through the family planning department, people have been stocking up with as many as they can get, and finding all sorts of industrial uses for them. Some workmen mix them with tar and concrete to give a smooth finish to roads, or to make waterproof ceilings, and some villagers use them to carry water when working in the fields. And, of course, youths turn them into water bombs. But the main use here is in the sari industry, where they've become an essential part of the production process."

Alam was explaining how Varanasi (population 1.3 million) manages to consume so many condoms each day. "There are 200,000 hand looms in this city, all making the



world-famous Banarasi saris, and all using condoms. It's the lubricant that's the main attraction. Sari weavers place the condoms on the spools, and the lubricant rubs off on the thread, making it move faster through their machines. Then they turn the condoms inside out, place them on their fingers, and use the lubricant to polish the gold and silver threads used in traditional women's outfits, giving them a lustrous sheen. Lately, government officials have got wise to the scam, and are restricting the number of free condoms they'll hand out, so weavers have to register several

times with fake identities to get a sufficient supply. If another better lubricant was available, then we'd consider using it, but nothing works as well as condoms." (The Japan Times, 24/4/05. Spotter: Paul Waller)

— ● —

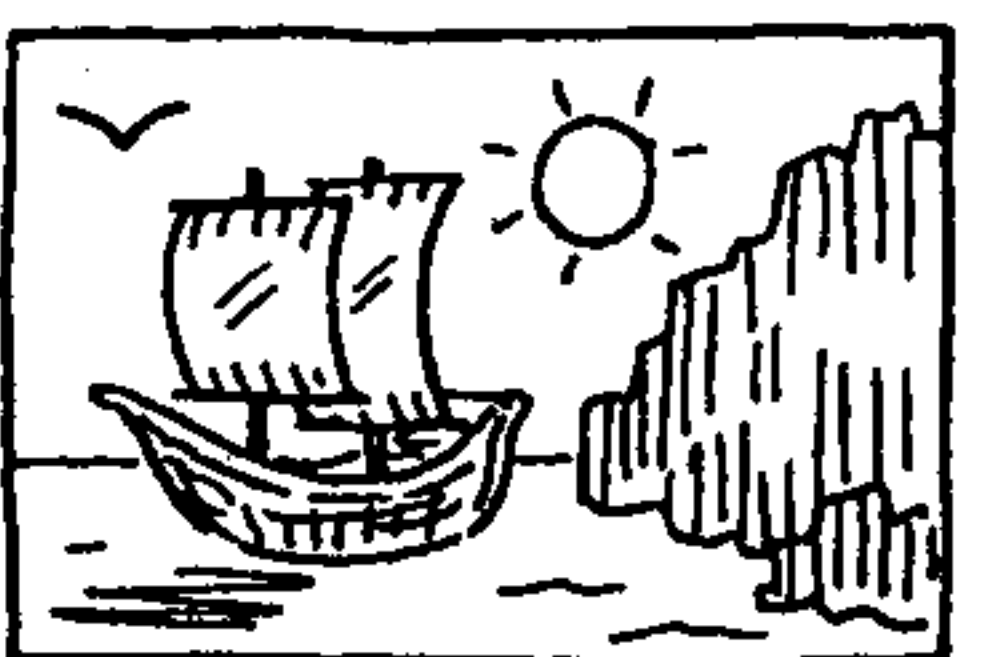
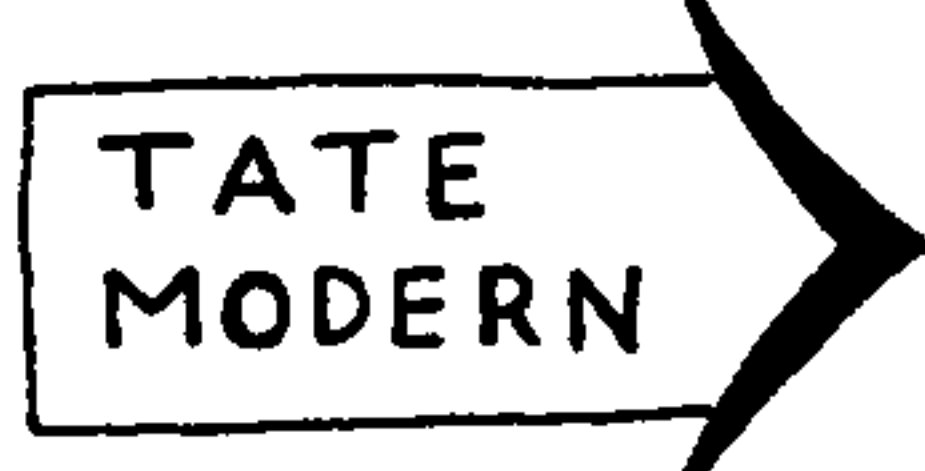
● "The patient came in complaining of severe pains in her left cheek," Dr Tawee Thanuparp-rangsarn told a press conference in Nakhon Ping Hospital in Chiang Mai, "and her face was so swollen that she clearly needed urgent treatment. So I checked inside her nasal cavity, and found dozens of fly maggots that had been feasting on her tissue, causing large festering wounds. In fact, they'd eaten so much of her flesh that some of her bones were exposed."

"After I'd removed thirty-four maggots and treated her with antibiotics, I tried to find out how this could have happened. She told me that she is a pig farmer, with a lot of flies on her farm, and I suspect that one had crept up her nose and laid its eggs there while she was sleeping. This is the first reported case in Thailand of fly maggots growing in a human nose, but the human head often serves as a host to parasites. Just last week, a colleague here treated a man who'd been drinking water from his local creek, and had an eight-centimetre-long leech attached to his larynx. Never drink from creeks. The water may contain a baby leech, and if it attaches itself to your throat, and gets bigger there, it can eventually block your respiratory tract and kill you." (The Nation [Thailand], 3/5/05. Spotter: Richard J. Daly)

— ● —

● "Sumo wrestlers have traditionally competed naked, except for a small mawashi, or wrapped loin cloth," a spokesman for Nihon Sumo Kyokai (Japan's professional sumo association) told reporters in Tokyo's national stadium. "But recently, the amateur association has been trying to encourage more young people to take up sumo, and there has been much talk of 'sumo pants.' We have received letters saying that 'pubescent kids are not going to take part if they don't look cool,' and some people are suggesting that we should allow people to wear a more substantial garment if they feel shy about competing in a state of near-nudity. Something similar to a pair of cycling shorts has been suggested."

"The committee has considered these requests, but the national stadium has its rules, and its own way of doing things. We have no intention of allowing children in pants into the ring, and anyone who turns up dressed in shorts instead of a mawashi will be barred from youth tournaments." (Yomiuri Shimbun, 24/3/05. Spotter: Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

a p p a r e n t l y	BY MIKE BARFIELD	FRIDA KAHLO'S EYEBROWS: THEIR SECRET LIFE		
		 JUST SHAVE IT NIKE-ALIKE LOGO	 FRENCH ACCENT	 DISTANT BIRD IN OIL-PAINTING
		Hummus ✓ VEGETARIAN MENU OPTION	 A WAVE	 ART GALLERY SIGN POST

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Due to popular demand, we are reprinting the vicar's sermon to the Sunday Club in full

Hello, kids!

Now, can any of you tell me what great event we are celebrating this year? No, not Live8, Rashid, though that is jolly important and I'll be talking about that later. No, something that happened all of two hundred years ago – even before I became the vicar here... No one knows?

That's a pity, especially since standards are so high in our parish schools at the moment, thanks to Mrs Kelly. Well, I'll tell you. It was the Battle of Trafalgar. No, nothing to do with the Poll Tax riots... though a good try!

Look, here's the story. There was once a very bad Frenchman called Napoleon. He thought himself so clever and so powerful that he could take over all the countries in Europe – Germany, France, Italy, Spain and even Britain!

No one was brave enough to stand up to him. They all ran away as soon as the big bully came into sight.

But there was one person who had the guts to take him on. A young, handsome, brave Englishman (not a Scotsman, you notice!).

And this hero was called Horatio Nelson and he said to Napoleon Chirac, "No. England expects every man not to pay any duty". No wonder this great man, Tony Nelson, has gone down in history as the greatest Englishman who ever lived. And all because he was brave enough to defeat the French in the famous Battle of the Rebate all those years ago.

The Winner Of The Children's Competition – To Draw A Picture Of The Vicar (surely Lord Nelson?)

*Adelaide de la Nougerede
(Aged 7)*



Well, that's enough of a history lesson – and something else I'm going to make history is poverty.

I expect you've all seen Saint Bob Geldof on the television preaching his message to his followers. Good for Bob, I say! But let's not forget who it was who



first drew the world's attention to the problems of Africa! No, not Bono, Rageh, and certainly not Mr Brown, thank you, Shane. The person who actually started the whole ball rolling was your vicar when he announced that he would "heal the scars of Africa". What a moving picture that paints, and doesn't it give us all something to think about while Mr Geldof is playing his guitar?

Now some of you might ask me "Vicar, you're going to save Europe. You're going to save Africa. What else can you do?"

Well, I'm not one to blow my own trumpet, but, as the Good Book tells us, "There is no point in hiding your light under a George Bush". So, I might as well tell you that next up, I will be saving the world from pollution!

Isn't that quite a tall order? you say. Well, not for a five-times-a-night man!! Sorry, kids, you'll have to ask your mum and dad what that means when you're a little bit older!!! Except for you obviously, Coleen, because you're pregnant.

Anyway the point is, "If you want something done, you ask a busy man" (*Book of Cliches*, 7.3).

And, hey, I'm probably the busiest man in the world. Yet people keep coming up to me in Tesco's and saying, "Vicar, when are you going to retire?"

Goodness me, what a silly question!! As Brother Rumsfeld said about Iraq only the other day, "We're going to finish the job if it takes two years, five years, ten years or a hundred years".

What a message of hope that is from one of America's leading Morons.

Is it just me or is it hot in here? I think I might have to go and lie down for a bit. Who said "It'll make a change from lying standing up?" Come on, own up! Someone said it. I bet it was you, Rashid. Right, you can't come on the Cubs outing to Warminster-on-Sea. That'll teach you. You see, zero tolerance.

I dunno... kids today. They think they can do whatever they like. That Mrs Kelly has got a lot to answer for...

(The Vicar was helped out of the pulpit at this point, suffering from an acute case of heatstroke and was sadly unable to finish his sermon.)

A CORRECTION FROM THE OFFICE OF MS CHERIE BOOTH Q.C.



In the last issue of the newsletter, I may have given the impression that I was going to open the Sleeping Tiger Shopping Mall in Kuala Lumpur, at the invitation of the respected local businessman, Mr Del Boi.

This is, of course, quite untrue. I never had any intention of opening the shopping mall in question nor of accepting any free gifts that Mr Boi might choose to send round in a large lorry to my hotel room.

Anyone who tries to suggest to the contrary will receive a writ of Harum Scarum from the offices of my friend Mr Falconer and will have to pay damages equivalent to the value of the goods in the lorry.

Yours threateningly,
C. Booth Q.C.

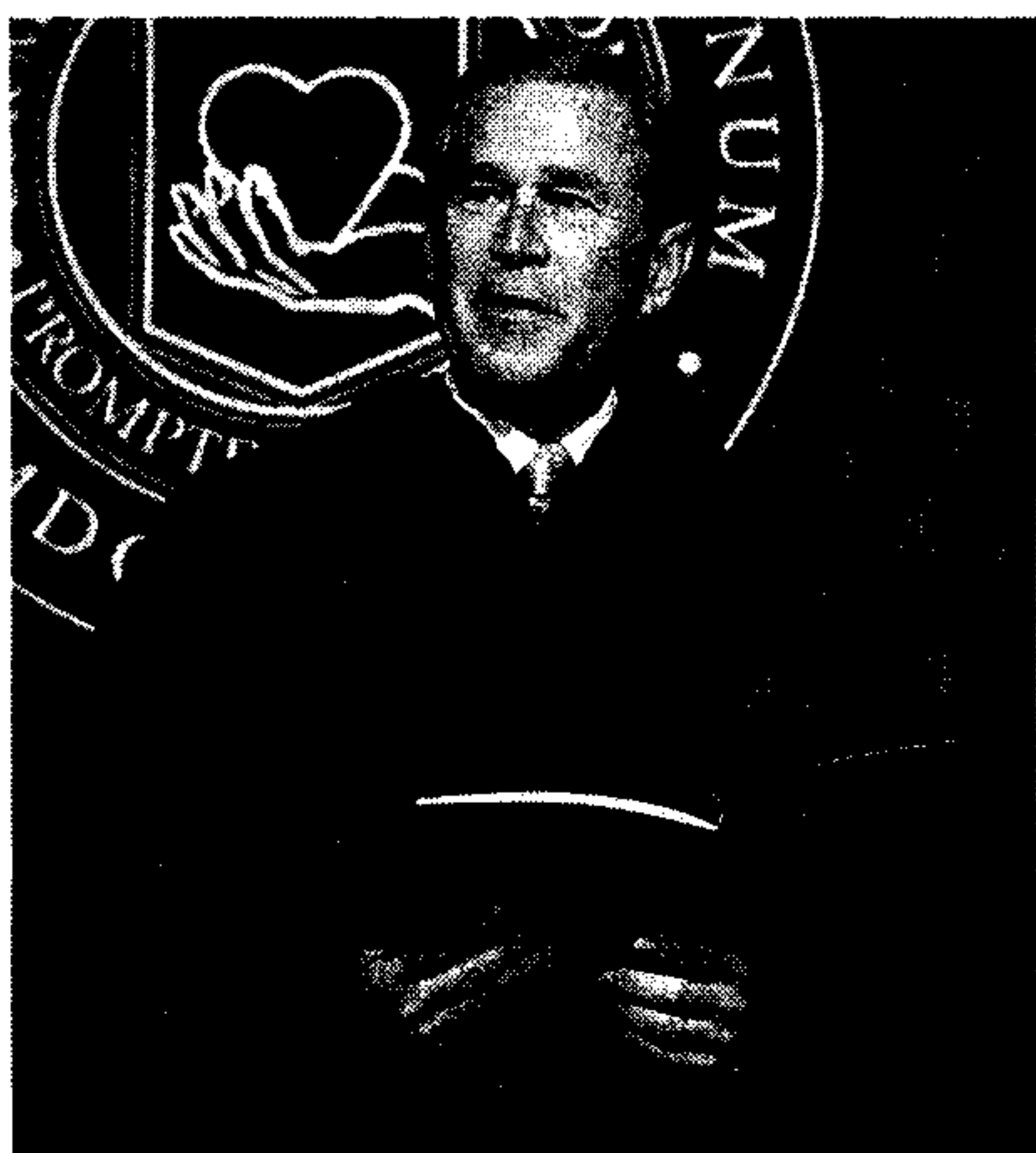
MR BIRT'S 'BLUE SKY' REPORTS



Mr Birt has been working on behalf of the vicar on a number of very important issues for the last five years. I have now decided to print these up and place them at the back of the church.

Some of you might find them worth looking at but frankly I wouldn't bother. For example Mr Birt has concluded that crime is caused by criminals, drug addicts take a lot of drugs, people who are ill need the Health Service, transport is required for people who want to travel and that children need education to learn things.

Interesting though these findings are, we shall not be requiring Mr Birt's services for too much longer and his room in the attic may well be given to Mr Blunkett as an extra office. We all look forward to Mr Birt's new reports on whether the Pope is Catholic and whether bears defecate in the woods!! (Thanks to Mr Prescott for the joke, although in his typical bluff way John didn't use the word 'defecate'!! T.B.)



A Message From The Rev. Dubya Bush Of The Church Of The Latter-Day Morons

Brothers and Sisters in Great Englandland! The crusade goes on despite some reversalties and difficultitudes – but are we a Brotherhood of Quitters? No, no, Siree! And are we grateful to your pastor, the Reverend Tiny Bloom for his steadfast loyalty and supportivity in the fight against the evil one – Yea, verily yea!!

In return I would like to say to Pastor Bloom, do not expect any favours in return, Buddy!

Particularly over the minor matters of the imminent destruction of the planet by fire and brimstone!

For as it is written in the good book “If a neighbour offers you his coat, take it and run away”.

So thanks Tiny for everything, but when it comes to this long-hair hippy nonsense about the sun fryin’ up the barbecue – I say “Hogwash”! Tell it to the marines – that’s if there are any of them left!

*Yours in the Lord,
Rev. Dubya*

Congratulations

👍 To EUAN BLAIR, who has won a special scholarship to travel to America as an intern for Rev. Dubya’s Church of the Latter-Day Morons. Euan will be doing top-level research for the Morons. Very few young men get such an opportunity on the basis of their own merits and it is a tribute to Euan that he was chosen out of hundreds of candidates to win this prestigious academic scholarship: The Rev. Dubya Open Award For Sons Of My Friends. As Euan put it “I’m following in my Dad’s footsteps, I’m working for Duyba!” T.B.

THE Sun WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Amazing revelations about the late Princess of Wales from the explosive new book *‘Diana’s Dead, So She Can’t Deny It’* by her close friend and confidante Simoney Please.

Includes the following incredible scoops:

● **Princess Diana slept with President J.F. Kennedy and then shot him in Dallas in 1963 as revenge for his dumping her in favour of Marilyn Monroe.**

● **Princess Diana had a passionate fling with the sexy Indian-born Mahatma Gandhi. “It was lust at first sight,” she said, “but he refused me**

because he was dead.”

● **The Princess rated all her lovers with marks out of ten. Elvis Presley was 3/10, Prince Philip was 8/10, but the Loch Ness Monster topped the list with a sizzling 11/10. “He pressed all the right buttons,” the Princess told Simoney shortly after her fatal accident.**

THE SUN SAYS

WHERE were you when you heard the news that Princess Diana had slept with J.F. Kennedy Junior?
Says Sun editor Rebekah Wad,

“I remember exactly what I was doing. I was giving this silly woman an enormous cheque for a load of bollocks”.

That Alastair Campbell All-Black Dossier in full

by our Rugby Staff Clive Woodlovetowin

A SENSATIONAL dossier about the threat posed to the British Lions by the New Zealand rugby team has been issued by their chief communications officer, Mr Alastair Campbell.

The dossier, entitled “The Danger To Britain”, contains sensational revelations downloaded from the internet.

■ **Aerial photographs reveal that the All-Blacks are capable of launching a full-scale attack on the British defences within 45 seconds of the whistle blowing.**

■ **Intelligence from someone who once met some of the All-Blacks in the pub suggests that the New Zealanders have been secretly training a crack squad of killer**

players, whose aim is to “take out” key British targets.

■ **Further reliable reports from agents in the field confirm that the All-Blacks have been developing lethal biological and chemical weapons in the form of deadly gas concealed in oblong leather canisters which would be released if the conventional New Zealand attack failed.**

British Liar

Mr Campbell has however been accused of “sexing up” his dossier in the hope of excusing the fact that the British Lions lost 94-0, again.

An angry Mr Campbell defended his dossier, saying it was reliable up-to-the-minute information, and added: “You’re all a bunch of fucking Tory scumbags – and I know where you live.”

“Churchill was a great friend of Hitler’s,” he said, “and the idea that he would want to kill him is utterly ridiculous. Heil Hitler.”

On Other Pages

- Ex-Eye Editor’s father was secret hitman **1**
- OK, he wasn’t, but we haven’t got any other stories **2**
- OK, so the documents are fake, but never mind, perhaps it’s true really **94**

CHURCHILL PLOTTED TO KILL HITLER



Churchill

Book’s Amazing Claim

by A.N. Wislon

IN a new book published today, *‘The Da Vinci Operation’* by Martin Allmadeup, hitherto unknown documents show that wartime leader Winston Churchill deliberately plotted to murder Hitler.

His plan was to send a huge army into Germany to seek out the Führer and cold-bloodedly kill him.

“These astonishing claims cast Churchill into an entirely new light,” says Allmadeup, “as a ruthless war leader who would stop at nothing to halt the Nazi hordes.”

But leading historian David Irving denounced the documents yesterday “as an obvious forgery”.

‘Why I Back David Cameron To Be Tory Leader’

By Former Shadow Chancellor OLIVER LETWIN

● **Because he went to Eton, like me.**

© The Sunday Torygraph

I WAS THERE AS HISTORY IS MADE

by Our Man In Hyde Park **Lunchtime O'Booze**

NOT SINCE the creation of the world have we witnessed an event as historic as the global phenomenon that was Live8 – and the important thing is... I was there!

As millions of people all over the world gathered in Hyde Park to join their voices to the universal movement to make the planet a better place, I was right at the centre of history.

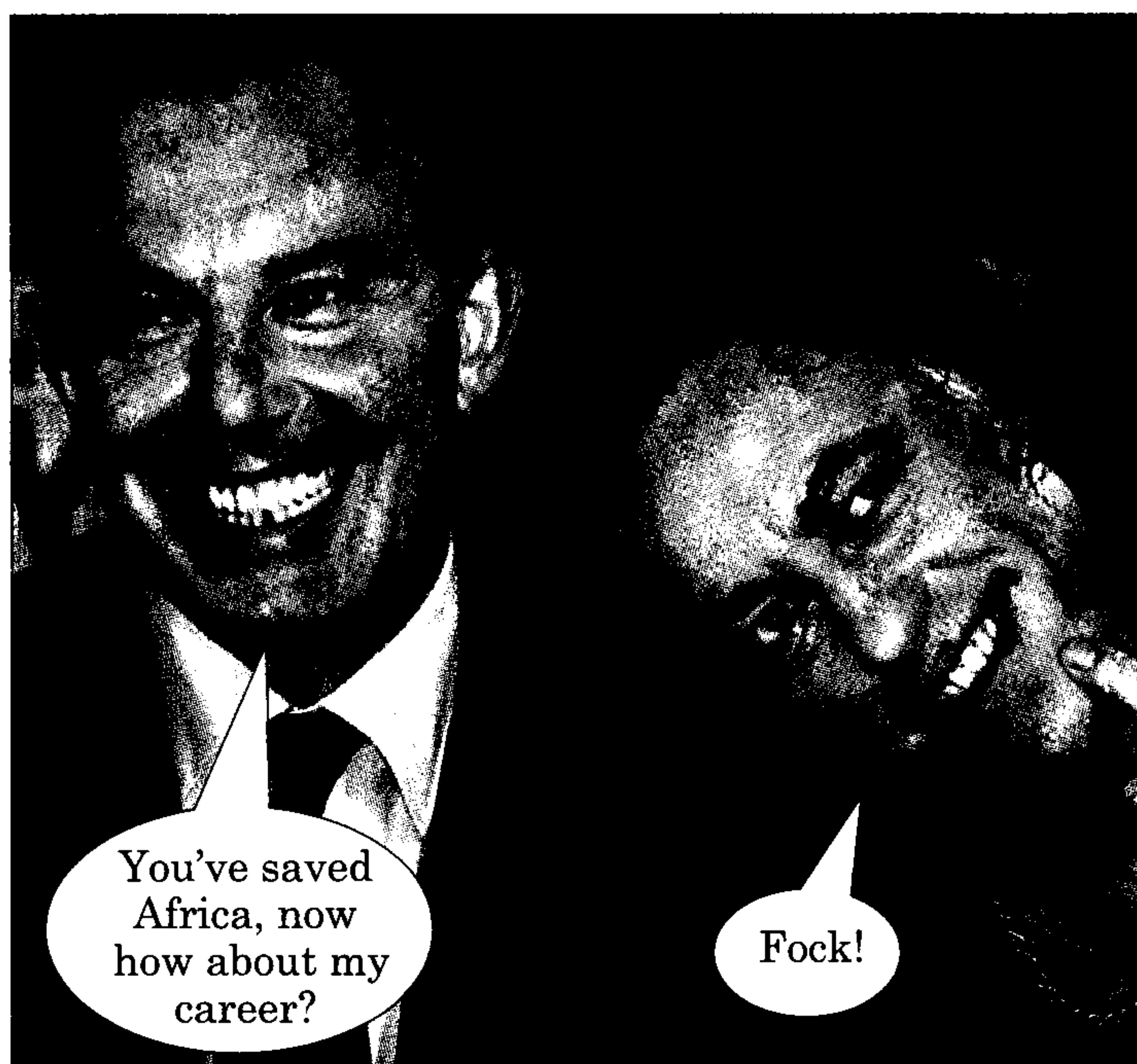
Alright, I had my doubts, but after five hours of non-stop drinking from some of the world's greatest bottles (*Surely 'magnificent rock music' Ed.*), brought together in the VIP area

for this incredible event, I too was moved to tears. Legendary names from the history of booze included Champagne, Gin and Tonic, Johnnie Walker, Kronenbourg 1664 and others too numerous to drink! Yes, it was a veritable galaxy of alcohol gathered together in one glass to unite all journalists of the world into writing this stuff. It was a night I will never remember. And the message came out loud and clear to the leaders of the world, "Where is the toilet?"

© All newspapers.

More of this 1 - 94

G8 IN PICTURES



GOD SAYS 'THANK YOU BOB'

by Our Heaven Staff **Angela Gabriel**

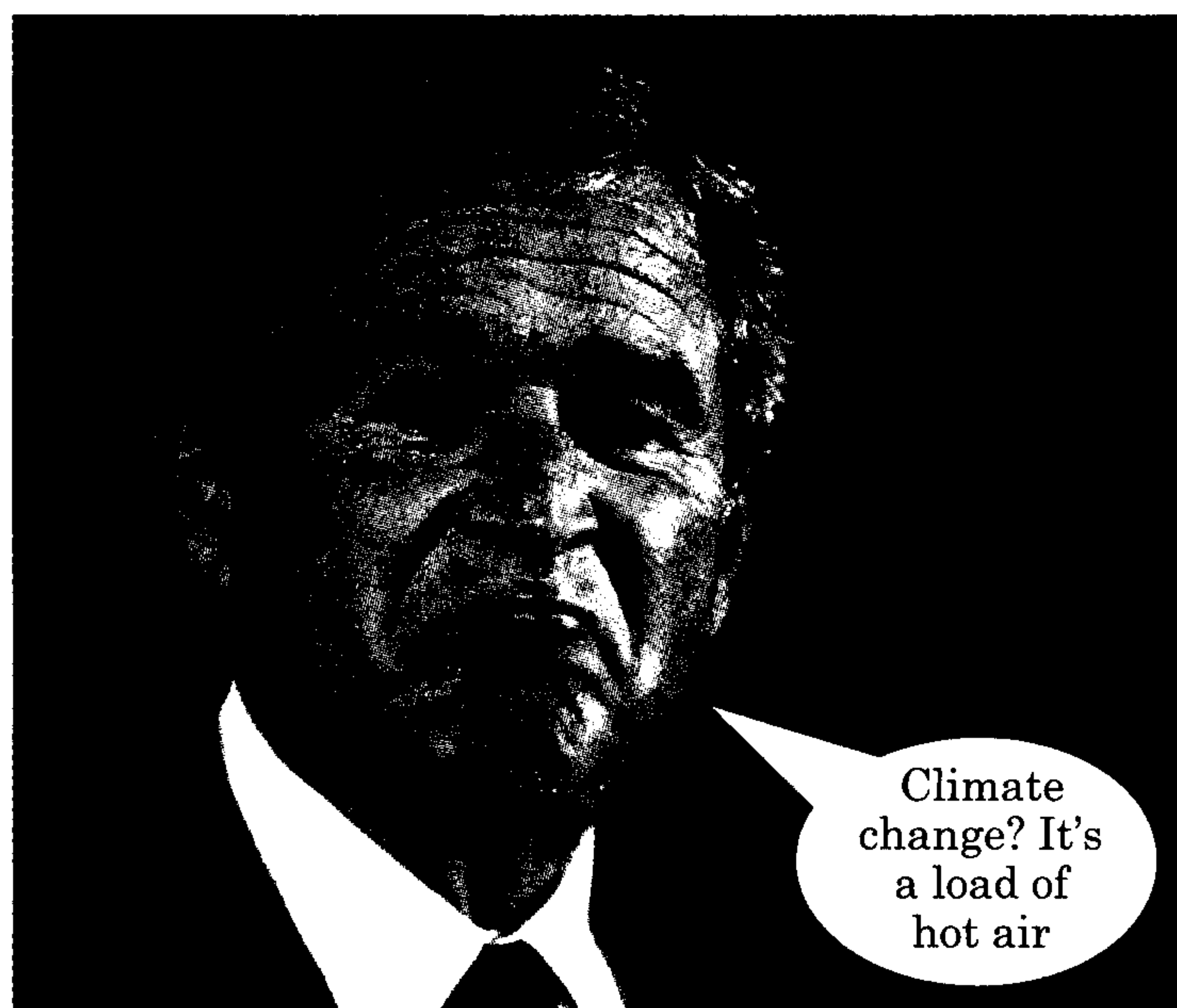
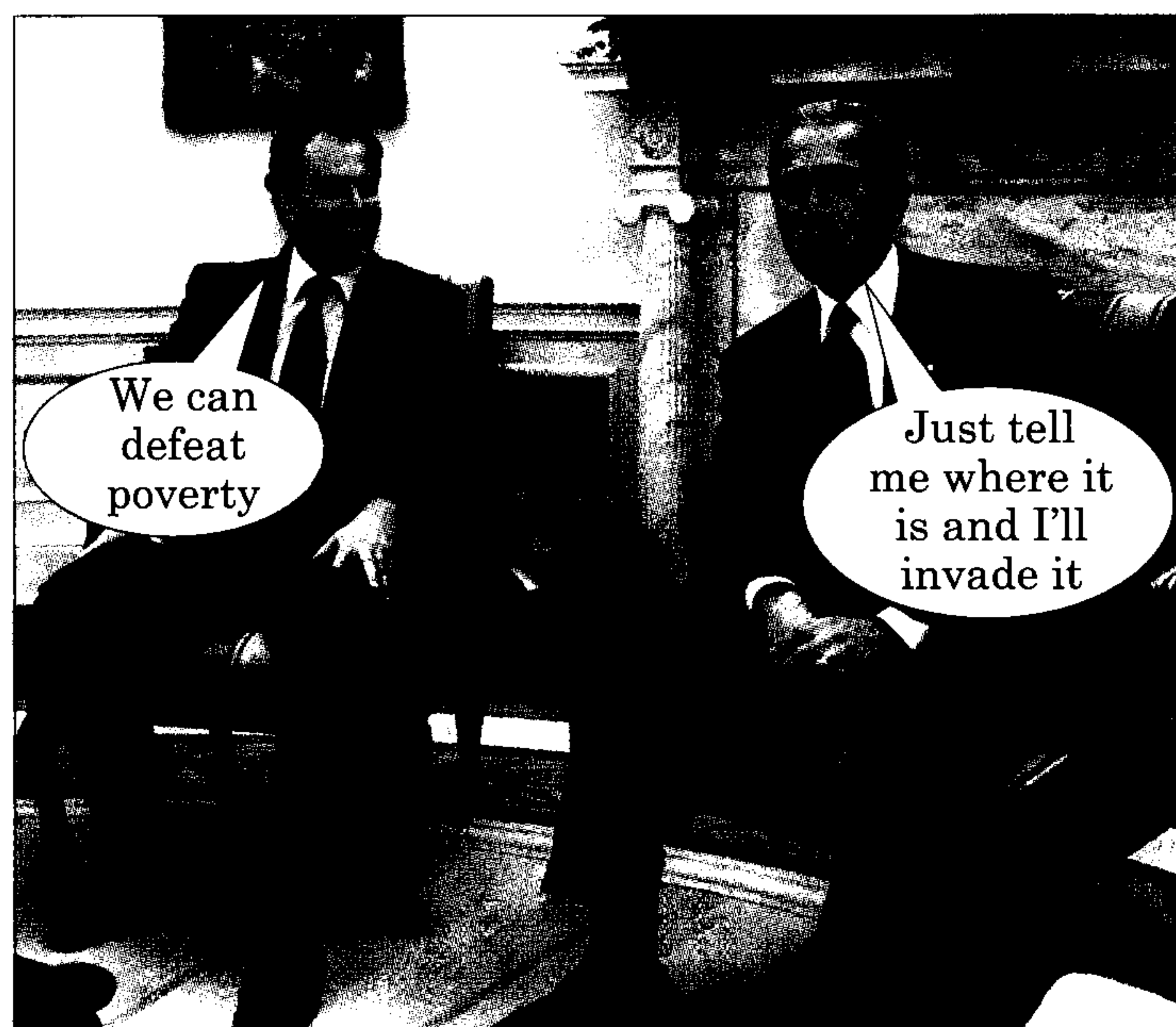
YESTERDAY the Almighty saluted the most powerful man in the universe, Bob Geldof.

"I've been around for ever trying to do good and this bloke has just done it in a weekend. My message has always been 'the poor will always be with you' but Bob has proved me wrong – in a couple

of days. I say hats off! If he ever wants a job he can come up here and have mine!"

ON OTHER PAGES

- Mozart admits "Bono's the tops!" **1**
- Handel – "Madonna's still got it!" **2**
- Beethoven – "Thank God I'm deaf!" **94**





"It's always the same when we make someone redundant"

Daily Mail

APOLOGY

IN RECENT years, we may have inadvertently given the impression that those seeking refuge from tyrannical regimes abroad were being less than honest in their motives for entering this country.

Headline such as "Go home, you benefit scroungers!", "We must be asylum suckers!" and "Sod off, foreign scumbags" may have led readers to believe that we at the Daily Mail were less than sympathetic to the plight of these refugees.

In the light of the Zimbabwean crisis currently embarrassing the government, we now realise that these poor, unfortunate men and women are nothing less than heroic victims of misjustice, glorious rebels in the name of freedom and a jolly useful stick to beat Blair with (*Surely "noble champions of democracy"? Ed.*).

We apologise for any confusion caused to our readers and say 'hats off to the brave Zimbabwean martyrs – may they stay here for ever'!

© The Daily Mail

New-look GCSE Latin Primer

How to decline:

Asbo I terrorise my neighbours

Asbas You complain to a policeman

Asbat He does nothing

Asbamus We come round and set fire to your car

Asbatis You (plural) move to another neighbourhood

Asbant They say the situation is under control thanks to the new Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

I.D. CARDS

Charles Clarke Spells It Out

by Our Home Affairs Staff **Liberty Purves**



THE Home Secretary, Mr Charles Clarke, today outlined the thinking behind the controversial introduction of I.D. cards.

"It's all about identity," he told the House of Commons. "You see, we don't have one and people have no idea who we are. Are we Tories? Are we Socialists? Are we Liberals? Just by looking at us you would have no idea. There are no distinguishing features to this government at all."

He continued, "But now, thanks to I.D. cards, we have a definite identity. You now know that we are illiberal, nannyish, irrational and arrogant."

When asked by MPs whether I.D. cards would help combat terrorism, prevent illegal immigration and stop benefit fraud, Mr Clarke replied, "I have

no idea. But what I do know is that I.D. cards will annoy everyone and be very expensive."

Late News

IDENTITY THEFT SHOCK

A MAN who gave a speech in the House of Commons earlier today was accused of identity theft.

Said a policeman, "It was shocking. He was pretending to be Charles Clarke, the Home Secretary, but in fact he is Fungus the Bogeyman from Slime Terrace in Bogeydom."

"If only we had biometric I.D. cards we could have ascertained at once that Mr Clarke was in fact a scary creature from the underworld whose only job is to frighten innocent human beings."

Exclusive To All Papers

Andy Murray Greatest Tennis Player Ever



unquestionably Britain's greatest tennis player ever (*He just won two matches. Ed.*), one who is now odds on to win every major tennis title this year, making him the youngest ever winner of the Grand Slam (*He only won two games. Ed.*), which means he is in fact the greatest tennis player of all time. (*You're fired. Ed.*)

ANDY MURRAY's incredible achievement in winning Wimbledon (*He won two matches. Ed.*) at the tender age of 18 means he is

Andy Murray To Earn Ten Million Pounds

EXPERTS say that should Britain's latest tennis sensation, Andy Murray, win every tennis tournament in the world next year, he'll earn TEN MILLION POUNDS!!!!

Tennis experts say the chances of Andy Murray winning every tennis tournament in the world are highly likely unless, of course, he gets beaten like he

did at Wimbledon in the third round, but the fact he stands to earn TEN MILLION POUNDS next year proves he's the greatest of all tennis players and means we can continue to fill pages over the summer because we've got to fill up pages with pointless articles about him earning TEN MILLION POUNDS somehow (*Cont. p. 94*)

POETRY CORNER

In memoriam Richard Whiteley, host of television game show *Countdown*

So Farewell
Then Richard
Whiteley.

It is the
End of the
Countdown.

You have one
Vowel and
Two consonants.

R.I.P.
E.J. Thribb
(17½ times nightly)

STUDENT GRADUATES

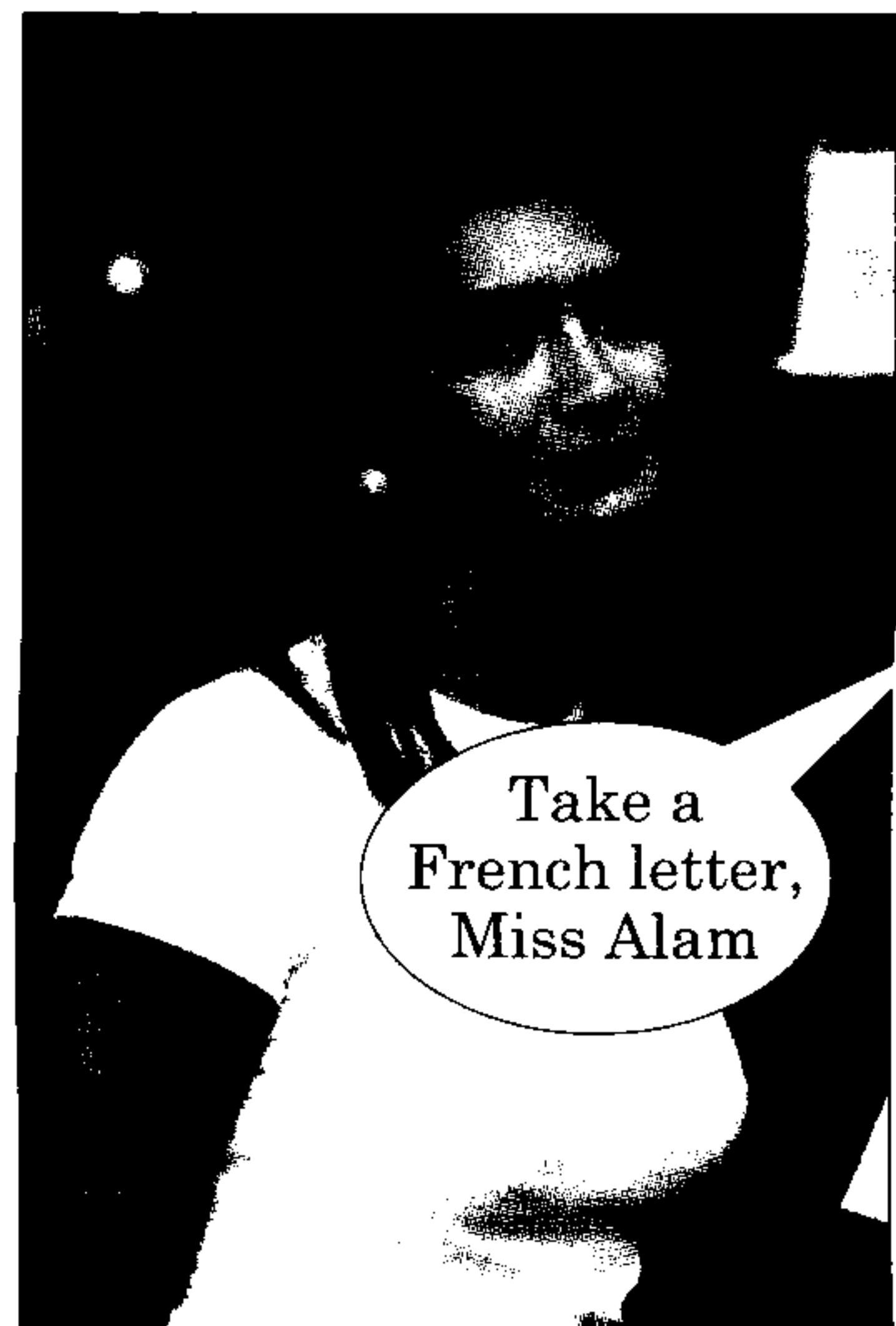
AMAZING news emerged yesterday when it was revealed that a student had graduated from university.

An eye witness said, "The fact that he was wearing a gown and a mortar board whilst clutching a scroll suggested to me that he'd just graduated."



On Other Pages
● Student's girlfriend graduates, too

FA SECRETARY IN SEX SHOCK



"This will record all the rubbish on TV you missed because you were out - and destroy it"

My eBay

one'soverthe (8)

Items I'm Bidding On (1-5 of 5 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐ Trendy! wrist-bands, 1 pair - embossed 'Left' and 'Right'	£9.99	£1.00	1
☐ Box of corn plasters (12 doz.)	£9.99	£1.00	1
☐ Home brew kit - beer, lager, scrumpy, etc - needs bucket	£17.99	£3.00	1
☐ Set of 6 x 200w hydroponic plant lights - grown your own!	£29.99	£10.00	1
☐ 2 dozen packs Rizla cigarette papers	£10.99	£2.50	1

Items I'm Selling (1-2 of 2 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐ Deluxe Fine Art set - paint, brushes, etc - unopened, still in box	£19.99	£4.50	0
☐ '20th-Century History For Beginners', p.b. - brand new, unread	£4.99	£1.50	0

Rationale

The present wording looks as though it has topographical errors in it.

Aberdeenshire Council report

News in Brief

BUSH 'AMERICA MUST REMAIN SCARED'

IN A major speech on the deteriorating situation in Iraq, President Bush today urged all Americans to remain 'scared witless' in the face of attacks by the insurgents.

"Osama bin Laden, he's scary... and so is the new Spielberg film... oh and spiders they're scary too," said the President. "And people wearing those 'scream' masks... and remember the Orcs out of Lord of the Rings, they're really scary too.

"As long as you, the American people remain scared witless, then my administration will never have to explain what a god awful mess we've made in (cont. p. 94)

LATE IRAQ NEWS

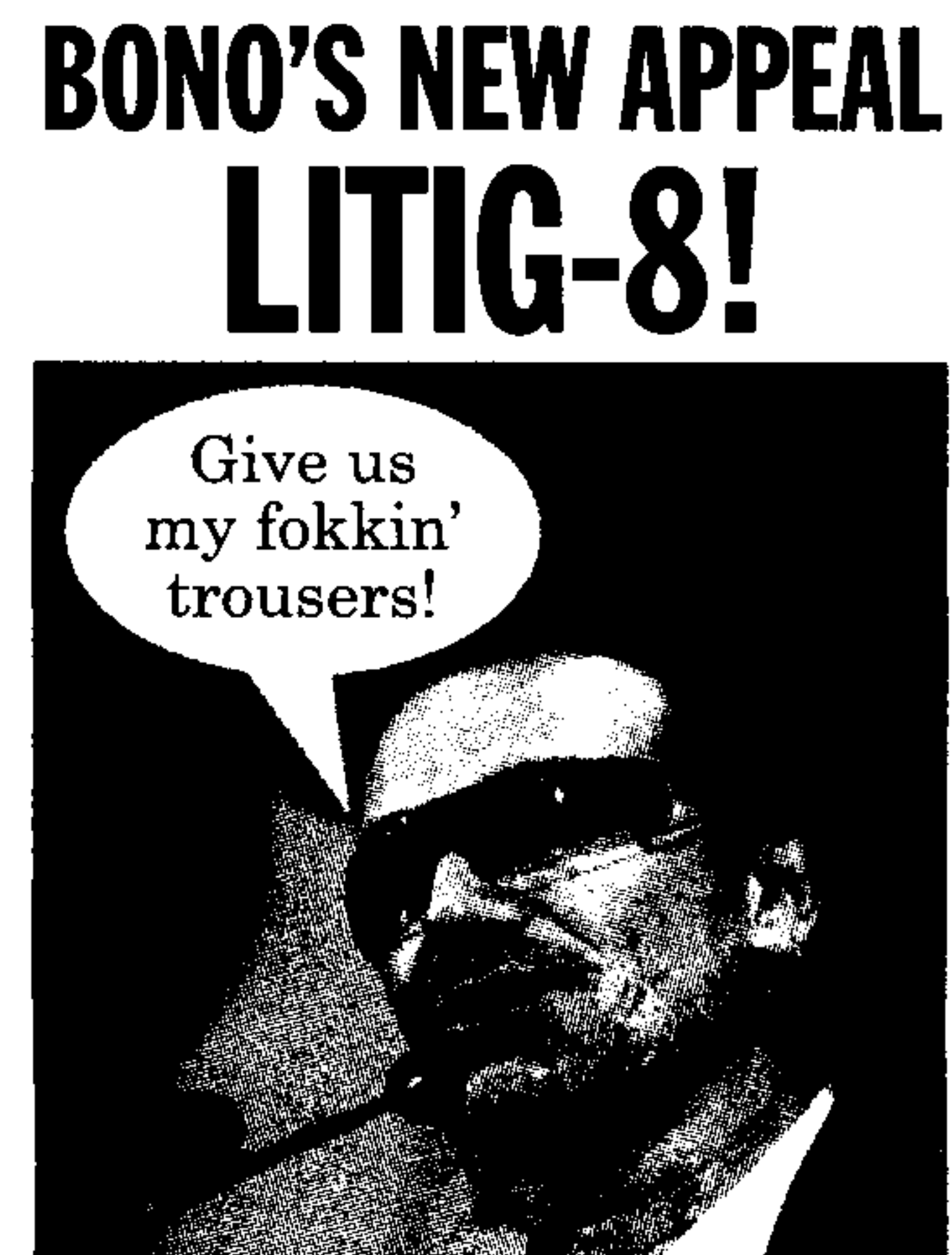
IRAQ insurgents have defended their decision to begin face-to-face explosions with members of the US military.

"We believe these face-to-face explosions are the best way to persuade these foreign fighters to leave Iraq," said a (cont. p. 94)

THE SUN TO BE SUED

IT WAS confirmed today that Abi Titmuss was planning to sue the *Sun* for not publishing a picture of her in her pants.

"I may be one of the world's most hated people, responsible for atrocities such as 'Celebrity Love Island'... but not to publish a picture of me in my pants degrades me and everything I lie down for," said the plastic fronted (cont. p. 94)



Put Out More Fags

by DAME SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles and his new bride have been invited on to HMS Intolerable to witness the historic Review of the Fleet in commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Now read on...

"IT'S so exciting..." said Charles, pointing out into the mist. "Over there, that's the Nigerian destroyer the *General Machete*... you can just make her out."

Camilla grabbed at her hat as the wind in the Solent built to a Force 9 gale.

"And over there – although you can't actually see her – is the Japanese aircraft carrier the *Emperor Hirohito*... Incredibly impressive."

Camilla stared hard at the grey choppy waters of the Channel and began to feel a

Supreme Kingdom of Majorca; the Royal Star of the Ancient Bailiwick of Sark; the Golden Oak Leaves of the Most Noble League against Windfarms – Camilla had seen Charles receive this one in person from the veteran campaigner Dr Barkworth at a special ceremony in the Multi-Faith Pagoda in the garden at Highgrove...

"It's so marvellous to see history coming alive... you know, it's just not taught in school any more; all they do now is play with their awful Gameboys... but Nelson was a real hero you know."

For a minute the wind dropped, a pale ray of sun illuminated the poop-deck, and Charles strode towards the prow with Camilla in his wake.

And as he stood with his arm thrust into the jacket of his uniform, Camilla listened spellbound as he seemed to



tiny bit queasy. If only she could have had a calming cigarette – perhaps a Senior Service would have been appropriate under the circumstances – but fate had decreed that this was the very day that she had decided to eschew the habit of a lifetime.

"Look through the bins, old girl, those things round your neck."

Charles gestured at her standard-issue Naval binoculars, but Camilla turned to her husband instead and gazed adoringly at him. How impressive he looked today in his uniform of Lord High Admiral of the Fleet, and how masterful, with his medals gleaming on his manly chest. The Imperial Order of the Holy Knights of Zimbabwe; the Grand Cross of the

undergo some strange transformation before her very eyes.

"Er... England expects every person to do his or her duty... I see no ships... Kiss me Thingie."

Camilla felt lightheaded. Was it nicotine withdrawal symptoms? The man at the Cirencester Boots had warned her that giving up suddenly could have strange side-effects. She might even, he had warned her as he handed over the organic herbal "Fag-Off!" patches, suffer mild hallucinations...

"My dear Lady Hamilton. How gorgeous you look today. And how good of you to come aboard my

flagship, the *Victory*, on this day of all days."

"Why, Admiral!" she found herself saying. "How gallant you are. And you make the British nation proud."

He took her hand and kissed it warmly. Their eyes met and there could be no doubting the flame of passion burning beneath the rows of glittering medals.

"Why don't we inspect my cabin?" he said smilingly, with a twinkle in his one remaining eye.

"But your wife, sire..." she stuttered.

"Let us not speak of *her* today. That sad and pitiable creature. No! Let us pluck the hour because we know not what fate will bring by sundown. As my old friend and mentor the Doctor from the Low Countries Sir Laurens van der Post, once put it so well, 'Eat, drink and be merry'. How true that is... how very true when you think about it... Er... are you all right?"

"ER... Are you all right, Cammers old girl? You've gone a sort of green colour."

Camilla opened her eyes to find Charles fanning her face with his white cap as she lay on the well-scrubbed deck of the British frigate.

"I was just saluting Mater and Pater on the HMS *Insolvent* over there when I turned round and you were sort of lying on the floor."

A team of naval officers immediately rushed to the scene and helped Camilla to her feet.

"Would you like to come in out of the rain?" asked one eager young flag lieutenant.

"Thank you," she replied weakly. "I don't know what came over me."

"Well it's a big day Ma'am. The excitement gets to all of us," he reassured her and Camilla soon found herself ensconced in the warmth and comfort of HMS *Intolerable*'s panelled wardroom.

"Would you like a paper to read, Ma'am?" he offered. "I'm afraid we've only got the *Sun*. It might cheer you up a bit though."

Camilla accepted with a nod of her head and tried to relax. Anything to take her mind of her seasickness. But there, staring out from the front page, was the less than cheering sight of Princess Diana, her nemesis, underneath the headline "Charles was useless in bed' says sexy Di".

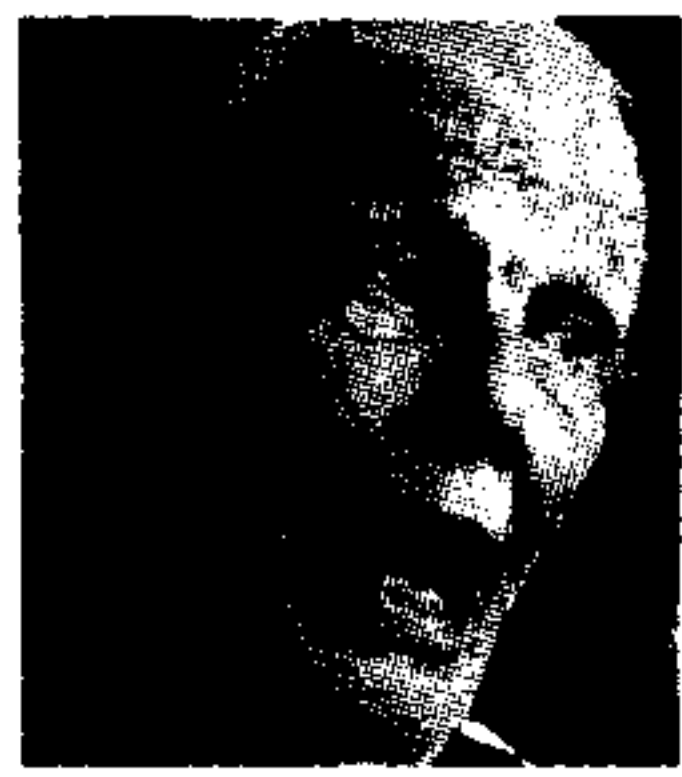
Camilla tossed the paper wearily to one side.

"Cigarette, Ma'am?" offered her young protector.

"Do you know, I think I bloody well will."

(To be continued)

The Daily Telegraph At 150



Bill Deedes Remembers The First Edition

WAS only a cub reporter at the time and I was sent to cover the siege of Sebastopol. What a challenge for a young chap freshly down from Harrow! The Crimea was a foreign country then, full of Russian chaps up to no good. Nothing much has changed from that

point of view! The Russian Bear is still up to his old tricks and in 1855 I witnessed them at first hand. The thing I remember most vividly was eating caviar at the Headquarters of the expeditionary force and remarking to Lord Cardigan that (cont. 1994)

DAILY TELEGRAPH, FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1855

The Telegraph

The launch of a new newspaper demands what may be known in the future as 'a mission statement'. The Daily Telegraph is an impartial commentator on the public realm. It owes no allegiance to any party. We shall examine each issue on its merits, without fear or favour.

And we shall conclude in every case that the Tories are the rightful rulers of Britain and that a vote for them is a vote for a happy, prosperous and great nation at peace with itself and at war with everyone else.

The Royal Courts of Justice

Mr. Justice Cocklecarrot, at the Old Bailey, yesterday sentenced Sir Roy Meadow, the quack and mountebank, to death for a number of offences where wretched women have been wrongfully imprisoned as a result of the doctor's mendacious testimony.



IS THIS LORD LUCAN?

by Dominic Sackwell-Lawson

A MAN who bears an extraordinary resemblance to Lord Lucan has been spotted in charge of the Light Brigade. The fugitive Earl, wanted in England for the murder of his children's nurse, has sought refuge in the ranks of the British army.

"I would have known him anywhere," said one observer. With his bushy moustache and aristocratic bearing there can be no doubt that this is the scoop of the century (*You're fired. The Barclay Brothers*)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TELEGRAPH

POVERTY IN AFRICA

SIR – Dr Livingston's ill-advised campaign to bring an end to the poverty of the African natives, well-intentioned though it may be, is doomed to failure. Indeed it may have the opposite effect.

Those of us who have spent any time in the dark continent know full well that the natives of that blighted land are incapable of managing their own affairs, corruption is rife and the leaders of the tribes have shown themselves to be greedy and cruel in equal measure.

Yet Dr Livingston, a saint in the eyes of a deluded minority of his admirers, persists in telling us that the savages, for let us not mince words here, are impoverished only at the hands of the European nations and not as a result of their own wickedness and folly.

Dr Geldof would do well to turn his attention away from Africa and to the suffering of his fellow Irishmen, so many of whom have perished through lack of sufficient potatoes, due to the callous indifference of the British Government (*Is this correct? asks the Editor*).

Yours

Sir Willoughby Gusset,
Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Announcement

Mr Charles Dickens, the famous author, will be at W.H. Smith and Sons (Booksellers and Stationers) in Cheapside to sign copies of his new novel 'Oliver Letwin' (or 'A Man Forgotten')

School News St Cakes

Empire Term begins on this day. There are 128 scholars in the House. The Rev. Ebenezer Aloysius Kipling (M.A., Oxon) has been appointed Headmaster, following the untimely demise of his brother, the Rev. Isiah Micawber Kipling (M.A., Cantab) who was consumed by cannibals whilst bringing the word of God to the natives of British Rumbabaland. H.R.T. Flashman (Bastards) is Chief Roaster of the Fags. Lord Snooty (Debretts) is Head of Pals. St Cakes Day will be celebrated on 12th July. The Speaker will be Lord Palmerston (O.C.) who will speak on "The Threat To Britain Of The Russian Bear". There will be a performance of Mandelsohn's Oratorio "Jeremiah" in the chapel performed by the School Orchestra with T. Brown, counter-tenor, attendance compulsory, conducted by the retiring Master of Music, Herr Herbert Von Toscanini. The Pugilistic Championships will be held on the Field of Blood (all scholars to compete) and will be judged by the School Chaplain, the Reverend Auberon St John Kipling. Leaves will be granted on August 29th. The new term, Prince Albert Term, will begin on September 1st. A fee of 16 shillings and 9 pence 3 farthings must be paid in advance by banker's order to the Bursar, Major (Retired) Algernon Kipling, 1st Buffs, C/o The Lodge, St Cakes, Solihull.

SPORTING INTELLIGENCE

The British gentlemen players at Wimbledon have failed to progress further than the first round, leaving the Continental players, once again, in undisputed pre-eminence on the lawns.



THE THEATRE ROYAL
DRURY LANE
Grand opening of the new
melodrama
'THE MOUSETRAP'
Limited season only



MISS ELIZA HURLEY, the popular Music Hall entertainer, delights her audience with a glimpse of finely-turned ankle.

ON THE OTHER PAGES

Filthy hospitals full of superbugs – says Florence Nightingale

The new railways are far too crowded – says Sir Christian Wolmar

Should the Lord Mayor of London impose surcharges on carriages entering the Metropolis?

You decide. Write now to the Daily Telegraph with your verdict

PLUS

The fiendish new puzzlement that is sweeping the nation –

The CROSSWORD!

Exclusive in The Daily Telegraph

MATTHIAS



1st Elderly Gentleman: I must get my eyes tested.

2nd Elderly Gentleman: And why is that, sir?

1st Elderly Gentleman: Because it says here in this newspaper report from the Crimea that we are on the same side as the Frenchies.

2nd Elderly Gentleman: Gadzooks, sir. So it does...

DIARY

BONO: Look to the future, for therein lies your past. That is my message for today. The pair of Calvin Klein underpants I wore at Live8 were expertly removed from my body by my third dresser shortly after I came offstage and then transported, unwashed, to the new Museum of U2 History in Dublin, where they will be on show for three weeks before going on tour through the USA and Europe as part of our touring exhibition of key U2 artefacts. By doing this, we are hoping to make underpants history. These pre-loved pants represent an iconic fusion of music, politics, fashion and bodily effusions. I would earnestly ask visitors to these exhibitions to treat these serious underpants with the care and attention that is most assuredly their due.



MY FAVOURITE FESTIVAL

HEATHER MILLS McCARTNEY: To be honest, back in the Sixties I headlined at Woodstock. How did I get there? I went to sea as a stowaway on a pirate ship called HMS *Heather*, and a shark bit off my head but I sewed it back on by myself and then I got stranded on a desert island, but eventually I like made it to Woodstock and I was right at the back of the crowd, see, just singing this song to myself, 'cos I had like all this love inside me, when the owner of Woodstock said, "Hey! This young lady can really sing!" and he sent me straight to the top of the bill, way above Janet Jopling and The Grateful Bread and that lot. And the crowd loved me and the others got like really really jealous but they couldn't stop me from getting the Nobel Prize for my performance, and I was still only like 11.

MICK JAGGER: My favourite festival? Yeah, right. It was in the Sixties, or was it the Seventies. One of those. Maybe the Eighties. Definitely not the Nineties. Too recent, though I s'pose it might of been. Same difference. And it was in the USA. Or France. One of those. Germany, maybe. That's it.

Frankfurt. No – Moscow. That kinda thing. Huge crowd of punters, me on stage beltin' out I Can't Get No Whatever. Magic moment, and one I'll remember forever.

SIR TERENCE CONRAN: I'll never forget the sheer excitement of inventing what I call the whole Festival Concept back in the Fifties. Up until then, the British had just tended to gather in crowds in a field and stand still for hours on end, staring at the gate, getting muddy.

For me, it lacked focus.

So overnight I came up with the idea of building a stage, hiring a with-it band to play a few tunes and perhaps flogging some chicken bricks and pine bunks on the back of it. And then, of course, I went into the Cavern Club in Liverpool one night and heard these four young mop-tops playing and signed them up, and the rest, as they say, is history...

NEIL KINNOCK: When I was a young lad, ooh, a good many years ago now, in fact more than I care to mention (but who's counting?!), I'd just come down from University with a degree, a very respectable degree, I might add, in Sums, and I managed to get myself a plum holiday job as assistant to the Sound Manager at the Isle of Wight Pop Festival, which was always held, in those days, on the Isle of Wight, which was, in my opinion, not only right but appropriate.

So, to cut a long story short – and let me make it quite clear here and now that I've always favoured the short story over the long story, at the end of the day, as it takes considerably less time – that's hours and minutes to you, boyo – to relate – so, as I was saying, to cut a long story short, or at least shorter, I was asked by my boss to help with what they called in those days the "soundcheck", which involved checking the sound.

Are you with me? So my boss wants me to say "1-2-3" into the mike, so I go onto the stage, and I pick up that mike with my right hand, or it may have been my left – by this time I'm very

nervous, very excited – and I kick off by saying, "So let me say from the outset, or start, how delighted, indeed, overjoyed, I am to be with you at this moment in time on this particular day. It is indeed a huge privilege not only for me, but for many hundreds of generations of Kinnocks, to be asked to count to three at this glorious festival, but before I..."

I went on in a similar vein – lighthearted but, to my mind, very much in the spirit – for no more than forty, forty-five minutes. Needless to say, I had a tremendous response, with all those warm, lovely people throwing food and spare change onto the stage and making V for Peace signs. My little speech meant that Dylan was obliged to cut forty-odd minutes off his set, but who's counting when you're having fun, or otherwise enjoying yourself?

Now, on the subject of fun, where was I?

MARTIN AMIS: I was sixteen or seventeen: at the time. At the time, I was sixteen or seventeen: years old. I hitch-fucked to the Reading Festival in a zit-wagon to see Genesis, just as Turgenev had body-journeyed to Paris, France, to visit that indefatigable truth-shagger Flaubert a century yonder.

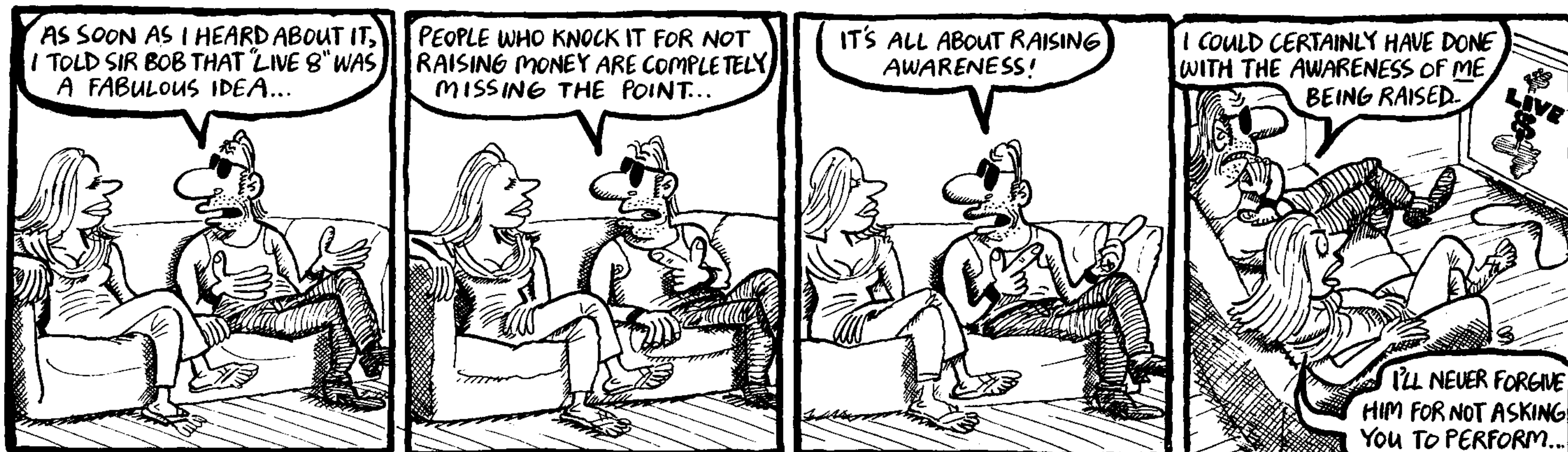
I remember this: this I remember. The rain urinated down, mega-drenching the field and turning the extravagantly hirsute crowd into an aerial shot of a clump of pubic hair in a toilet bowl. But Genesis sang that day as though great shards of song-pus were expectorating out of their mouths to be caught lovingly in the unblinking erotic basin of our zitty teenage waists. It was indeed a day: to remember.

NOEL GALLAGHER: We played fuckin' Glastonbury last year. I'm not slaggin' it off 'cos it'll cause fuckin' bedlam but it was fuckin' shit, with all these kids in the crowd like fifteen, sixteen years old. No respect, kids these days – all they fuckin' do is dress filthy and use foul language and drink too fuckin' much. Like, we went on the fuckin' stage and Liam fuckin' glares at them and tells them to behave and when they don't he spits out his Stella at them to teach them a fuckin' lesson in manners and they get all fuckin' aggressive on us, like they deserve a good slappin'. The young to-fuckin'-day. Who taught them to fuckin' behave like that, man?

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER



Literary Review

Forget it

The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana

Umberto Eco

(Secker & Warburg, £17.99)

YOU ARE what you read. That seems the basic idea behind Umberto Eco's new novel, in which a middle-aged antiquarian book dealer, having lost his memory, attempts to reconstruct his sense of self by re-reading everything he has ever read before.

His amnesia has been caused by something like a stroke. He can remember impersonal facts, such as how to talk and read in several languages, but not his own name, or the sensation of brushing his teeth. He can discuss his condition with his doctor, but he cannot recognise his wife. He can recall the content of many of the classic books he sells in his shop, but not the shop itself or the lovely Polish girl who works there, with whom he wonders if he might have had an affair. But what's the good (or harm) if he can't remember?

Cue various musings about the use and abuse of memory; whether you can have a soul if you have no recollection of good or bad deeds; the extent to which you create a sense of identity by selectively editing your memories, and so forth. There are some interesting ideas at play amid the clunky exposition in the first part of the book, but Eco does not spend much time playing with them. Nor does he do very much with the various narrative possibilities thrown up by his protagonist's dilemma.

One could imagine a thriller writer with a paranoid streak making something very noir and convoluted with this material. (Brainwashing, alien abduction, demonic possession etc.) But Eco's relationship with pulp literature is, as you'd expect, rather more academic. What he produces instead is not so much a novel as a rambling, self-indulgent nostalgia-fest.

His protagonist is named Bodoni, which is not just a classic typeface but potentially a quasi-anagram ("Nobodi"), suggesting in turn both an archetype and an echo of Eco himself (to whom such multilingual punning would, one feels,

come quite naturally).

Bodoni may be a book dealer, but he could as easily have been a professor of semiotics at Bologna University, for all the difference it would have made. The childhood whose literature he mines for clues would appear to share much with that of the author himself. For example, in a recent book of essays *On Literature* (2005), Eco recalled a sketch he wrote as a boy, recounting his public demonstration of a technological marvel, one of the first unbreakable glasses, which, when expectantly dropped, embarrassingly smashes. The same story reappears here (pp 209-210), presented as an example of Bodoni's youthful efforts. (One wonders if the extensively quoted adolescent poetry is of similar provenance.)

What follows is basically the story of a man reading other stories, interspersed with pictures of old book covers, cartoons, newspaper front pages and bric-a-brac. These represent the hoard of old stuff dating from the 1930s and 40s that Bodoni finds in the attic of his grandfather's house in the country, where he has gone to recuperate. Delving into this hoard will, he hopes, rekindle the mysterious flame of memory in the fog of his current unknowing. The fog metaphor is Eco's own and is laboured throughout. The mysterious flame is also that of immortality, according to the somewhat Rider-Haggardly pulp fiction, found in the hoard, whose title is co-opted for the novel. Bodoni calls it, rightly, "an incredibly dumb story".

The text is full of quotes, half-quotes and allusions, which will send the literary train-spotters scurrying to their own book-hoards, and some of the pictures (all apparently genuine, and duly acknowledged) are quite fun. But the resulting mix looks more like an illustrated catalogue than a novel, a catalogue filled out with encyclopaedic entries by a nerdy and obsessive bore.

It's really just an essay posing as fiction. But if Eco wants to celebrate mid-century Italian culture, presenting it as a novel (even one narrated by a self-confessed "logorhoeic mystic") is probably the most profitable way of doing so.

In the final section, Bodoni has another stroke or cardiac incident, as a result of which he goes into a coma: the outside world is com-

pletely excluded (for all he knows, he might be dead) but his personal memories conveniently return. The memories he was seeking to recapture in the earlier section of the book now flood back uninhibitedly, overwhelming him with self-knowledge. But is it all an illusion? Has he simply perfected the shadowy fake recollections generated by his re-readings? Is he even still alive? Frankly, by this stage you don't really care. After nearly 450 pages you begin to yearn for the soothing balm of amnesia.

Pity pater

iPod, Therefore I Am

Dylan Jones

(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99)

DYLAN Jones's *iPod, Therefore I Am* is supposed to be the memoir of a perennially hip, obsessive muso whose introduction to an iPod changed everything. But it ends up as the inchoate ramblings of that stock comic character Embarrassing Middle-Aged Dad, who thinks he is down with the kids, when in fact he has arrived on the scene several eons after everyone else moved on. So it is with Jones and his iPod. It turns out that he was unaware of the iPod's existence until mid 2003, at which point more than a million had already been sold. Not only was he slow off the mark to get one, but his wide-eyed proselytising, ("The iPod has consumed my life like few things before it... My iPod is my hotline to God... The iPod is uniquely egalitarian...") is also old hat: iPod paeans are a well-mined seam these days, including one with the catchy title "iPod - therefore I am" that appeared in the *Guardian* a year-and-a-half ago.

Even muso memoirs have had their day. Andrew Collins, Paul Morley, Stuart Maconie - practically anyone who ever worked at the NME has weighed in with a poignant (yet hilarious!) story of their soundtracked lives in recent years. Like Jones's, they all tell of the geek made good, initially sequestered in a pebbledash bungalow with some bad flares and a Clash LP, now bestriding TV List shows like a colossus.

If he hadn't been editor of GQ we may presume such a lazy knock-off would have been consigned to the slush pile. Conversely, however, that would have been a shame, because Jones's self-love is - unwittingly - rather entertaining. The winning irony behind it all is that our man sees himself as a fountain-

head of the zeitgeist with his fixation with nomenclature and proprietary names: "My transparent Macally mouse glows red as my index finger clicks left. I'm opening iTunes on the vertical panel bar. I open a jewel case and slip the CD into the disc port in my PowerBook G4. Seconds later an icon appears on my desktop."

When Jones runs out of things to say about Apple Computer, Roxy Music, iPods and himself, he turns to the Polyfilla of faltering men's mags and TV schedules, the detailed countdown. The final 70 pages consist of a succession of lists, from seven pages of "English Country Garden Rock" to the "100 Best Songs from the 100 Best Jazz Albums", (fully annotated by a man who 50 pages early admits that three years ago he had no interest in jazz). There is the distinct impression that Jones has been given a word count and that he will throw in just about anything to reach it. To this end we get a well-worn potted history of Apple Computer, snatches of random travelogue and a simply sensational interview with Dylan's wife, conducted by Dylan, on the subject of Dylan.

In other words, a cornucopia of extraneous drivel. It all adds to the feeling that if there ever was anything of interest to be said about iPods, it's probably been said already. But that's always been the worst thing about Embarrassing Middle-aged Dad: he never knows when to shut up.

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Blinking Light Paul Theroux

HE SAT, mutely attentive, in the shallow light that fell, slantingly, from behind glaucous, unregenerate clouds.

"So, Paul - I mean Slade - "said the woman, pen phallically poised above the virginal note-pad, slipping off the black brassiere that seemed to graze upon the august verdure of her ribs. "Tell me about your new novel."

Paul, I mean Slade, loved Ava for the intensity of her confident suggestions. The best sex, he thought, was a second chance, that unlooked-for high-octane carouse on love's well-burnished bar-stool, that cramped, convulsive unknotting, an eager fumbling among the tinned-peach ooze of her...[continues]

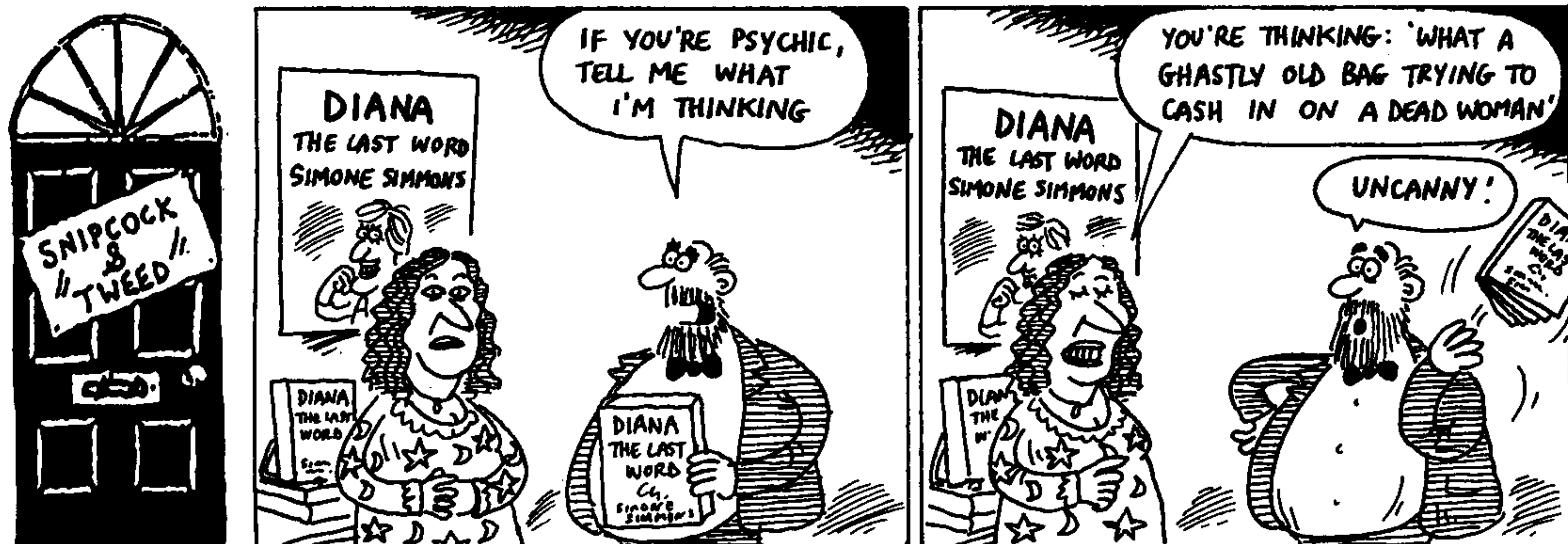
"Come on" she said. Some evenings Ava helped him off with his clothes. It was intensely erotic, like being undressed. "The novel. Tell me about it."

"Hey! It's about this writer guy who's spent 20 years blocked on a book. Plus his sex life's gone down the can big-time."

"That doesn't sound very original."

"No, wait! So he flies down to Ecuador and drinks this weird drug or something which makes him have visions and stuff. And then he dictates the new book to this chick. You know, with her helping him with the sexy bits."

"You're kidding me, Paul - I mean Slade. Shall I take off my knickers now?" (Continues very embarrassingly for 94 pages)



Pseud's Corner

Long before the owners of sundry shopping malls decided to demonise the hooded sweatshirt, Gilbert and George were revelling in its potential. They see it as a clothing version of a foreskin, a simple way of expressing your masculinity.

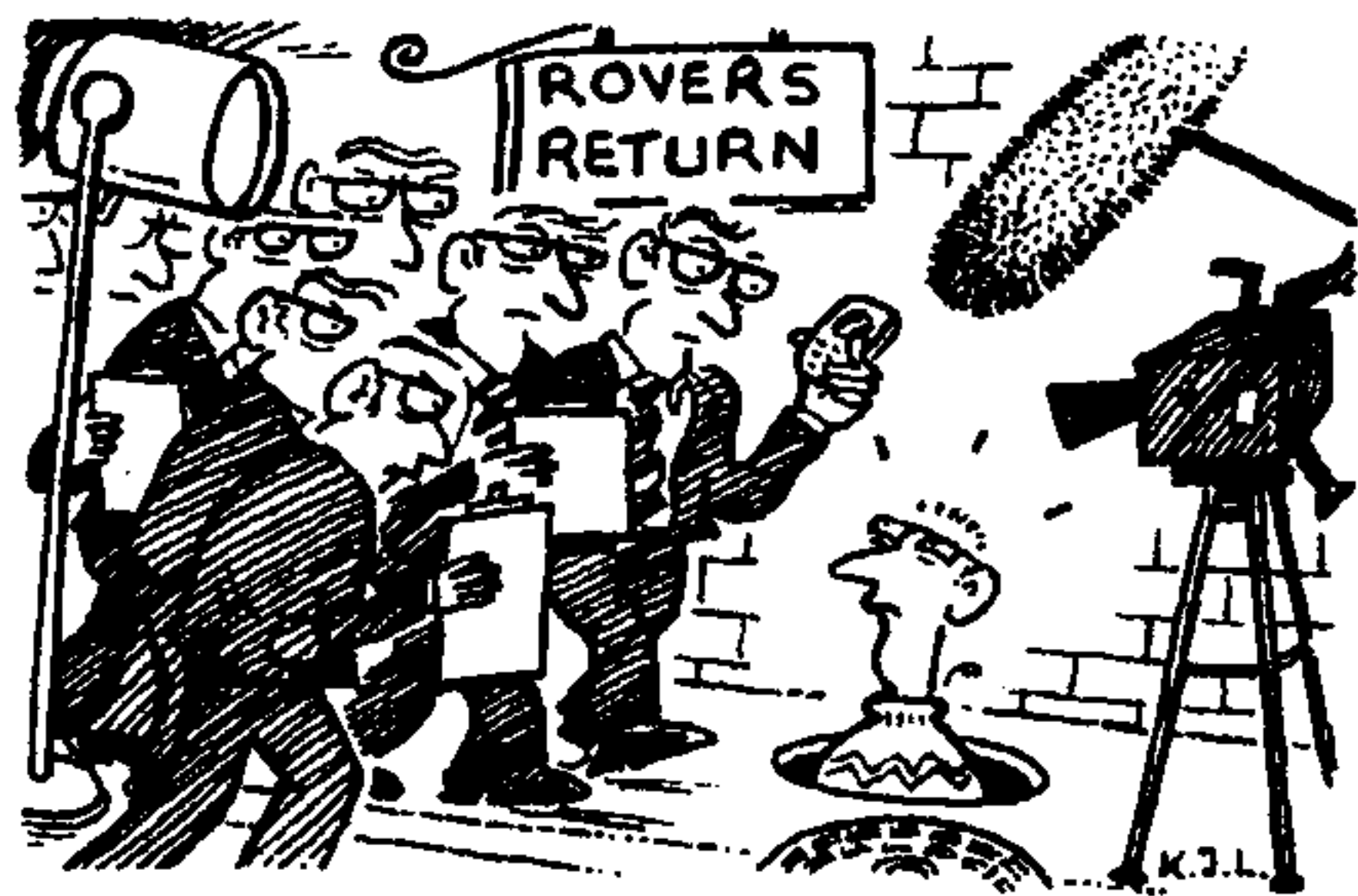
JANET STREET-PORTER
Independent on Sunday

Bristol Zoo and the Transmediation of Nature

Nils Lindahl Elliott, Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies, University of the West of England

Nils' talk will report on his research on Bristol and Paignton Zoos, particularly what he describes as dynamics of transmediation. This involves the recontextualisation of modalities, or aspects of modalities, of observation. It entails both the maintenance and transgression of social contexts by forms of displacement which are at one and the same time imaginary and embodied, "local" and mass-mediated. His talk will consider some of the implications of this process for zoo design, and for pedagogic communication in zoos.

From a flyer advertising a talk at the Bristol Watershed



My great-grandfather had a metal plate in his head. He used to tap his pipe out on it. He got the plate 'cos he stuck his head up out of a trench and received a direct hit. He was in the Somme at the time, fighting for something he believed in. And so it is, 80 years later I'm sticking my head out of a trench in the cause of something I believe in. ITV execs and schedulers get ready to aim.

Coronation Street scriptwriter
DARAN LITTLE, *Broadcast*

There is also new guidance on etiquette, such as the correct seating of a Lady of the Garter at a formal dinner, or how to address the widow of a Scottish Lord of Parliament's son.

ZOE GULLEN, editor of *Debrett's People of Today Review* appraises the new edition

A popular postgraduate panel will suggest new ways of reading the novel [Great Expectations], using gendered contemporary discourses of dementia to propose an understanding of Miss Havisham as menopausal, deploying theories of memory and nostalgia to explore childhood in the novel, and interrogating the text's various forms of bodily care, including homoerotic nursing.

From the programme for 'Dickens Day',
Birkbeck College, University of London

Mr Barroso told Bono a lyric from U2 song Zooropa had inspired an article he wrote about the future of Europe.

To applause from Bono, he recited the lyric: 'Don't worry baby, it's going to be all right. Uncertainty can be a guiding light.'

BBC news website

CONTRIBUTORS: 'Hounslow Harry', Ronald Paterson, Emily Lane, D. Esam, Jonny Martin, Andrew Moffat.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

ACTION FOR AFRICA

Business as usual

IN THE run-up to the G8 summit Tony Blair made a special effort to praise Business Action for Africa, a corporate get-together he called "a new channel to foster vigorous private sector involvement in Africa".

Many of the businesses involved, however, are specialists in vigorously channeling profits out of Africa – sometimes with questionable methods.

Business Action for Africa is chaired by Mark Moody Stuart, who also chairs Anglo American, the mining company with many gold and diamond interests in Africa. Earlier this year Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report showing how an Anglo subsidiary had paid the FNI, an armed militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). "AngloGold Ashanti [the subsidiary] provided logistical and financial support that in turn resulted in political benefits to the armed group and its leaders," said HRW.

The FNI is not the legal government in gold-rich Mongbwalu but controls the area, where it routinely tortures, murders and dismembers civilians. The FNI told Human Rights Watch it gave AngloGold written authorization to investigate gold deposits. In return the firm gave the FNI money, paid "taxes" on cargos, lent out

the company jeep, let FNI members ride on AngloGold flights and promised to help build roads and hospitals.

AngloGold told Human Rights Watch its contacts with the FNI were "unavoidable" and that it paid the FNI \$8,000 in January 2005 "under protest and duress". However, FNI's leader, "President" Floribert Njabu, lived in a house on AngloGold property, guarded by child soldiers. The firm said the FNI occupied this and other properties "without either seeking our permission or receiving our approval." None of these incidents persuaded AngloGold to pull out.

Standard Chartered bank is another corporate partner in Business Action for Africa. It is also lead arranger of a \$2.35bn loan to Angola to be repaid with oil revenues. The IMF, World Bank and several NGOs have criticized oil-backed deals because they give huge, secretive funds to the Angolan government. There is no suggestion of illegality on Standard Chartered's part, but by facilitating this kind of deal it is making corruption by Angola's rulers much more possible.

Nestlé is a particularly dedicated to "business action" in Africa and has been regularly criticized for marketing powdered baby milk in areas without clean water. In 2003 it was accused of marketing milk powder to mothers in Togo and Burkina Faso in violation of the World Health Organization code. And in 2002 it faced public fury for trying to sue impoverished Ethiopia for £3.7m compensation over a subsidiary nationalized in 1975.

For British American Tobacco (BAT), African sales counterbalance lost cigarette markets in Europe. But it's hardly encouraging that in 2000 the BBC found that in Gambia BAT was handing Piccadilly cigarettes to youngsters at BAT-sponsored volleyball matches during the school holidays.

DEPORTATION

Zimbabwe zealots

HOW CAN Tony Blair condemn "the appalling cases of torture and abuse of human rights that occur on a daily basis in Zimbabwe" as he did last week, and then allow the home office to send genuine refugees back to Robert Mugabe's clutches?

While Mr Blair and his ministers refuse to reimpose a ban on Zimbabwean deportations but blithely assure parliament that no opposition activist need fear because each case will be decided on its merits, the immigration department is trying to spirit the same refugees out the back door.

Last November, immediately after the ban was lifted, one of the first Zimbabwean asylum-seekers to be targeted for deportation was Crispin Kulinji (pictured). As the *Eye* reported at the time, it is hard to find a refugee more deserving of asylum than this 32-year-old. He is a well-known Zimbabwean opposition activist, whose plight at the hands of Mugabe's Zimbabwean National Army (ZNA) was recorded in the press and raised by Morgan Tsvangirai, Zimbabwe's opposition leader.

Crispin was organising secretary for the Opposition Movement for Democratic Change when he was abducted, tortured and left for dead. His mother was raped and his sister beaten. He

spent four months in hospital with serious head, internal and leg injuries. Nevertheless he was fast-tracked through the asylum process and ordered out. His deportation was only stopped following the threat of judicial review and a growing clamour from MPs, lords and activists.

Despite the reprieve, the home office then sought to deport him again, a move only thwarted by yet more publicity and mounting international anger about Mugabe's latest outrages.

As evidence of the government's "firm but fair" policy, Crispin is now in Campsfield detention centre, from where the home secretary has consistently refused to release him. His lawyer, Suzanne O'Connell, has had to apply for bail.

Ministers remain determined to deport him not to Zimbabwe but to Malawi. But given the latter's links with Mugabe's regime, say his supporters, they might as well sign his death warrant and be done with it. The reason for returning him to Malawi is that he came into Britain on a Malawian passport. That was because Zimbabwe police had his real passport.



BRITISH COUNCIL

Goodbye Kisumu

THERE are few things as effective in the fight against global poverty as providing free access to knowledge and education. So with all eyes on African development, the British Council has announced that it is to close its library in Kisumu, Kenya. Doh!

Newspapers in Nairobi reported that British Council regional director Peter Skelton had visited the town hall to announce plans to close the 30-year-old Kisumu Library, claiming there was "low demand for traditional library services".

Samuel Okumu, headteacher at Dago Kokore secondary school, told *The Nation* newspaper this simply wasn't the case, while Kenyan MPs and

representatives of the Anglican church are taking their protest to the British embassy.

The library serves students in Western Kenya and provides bulk lending to schools which cannot afford textbooks. Closure is scheduled for September, though a previous attempt to close the service in 1999 was staved off by big protests.

A British Council spokesman said library membership was too low to justify keeping it open. "The good news is that all the books will stay in Kenya as we have donated those; and with the money we're saving we're looking to extend our work with children in twinning schemes with schools in the UK... The world moves on."

TAX PLANNING

Green with envy

A RECENT high court decision defeating a common tax dodging trick for family companies has landed small firms with a bill estimated at hundreds of millions of pounds – but looks unlikely to cost one of Britain's largest family companies a penny.

Mr Justice Park ruled that a businessman who chose to pay dividends from his company to his wife rather than to himself because she was a lower rate taxpayer could still be taxed as if he had received them.

This is the effect of a law dating back to the 1930s which HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) says "is intended to prevent an individual from gaining a tax advantage by making arrangements which divert his or her income to another person who is liable at a lower rate of tax or is not liable to income tax".

Probably the largest ever dividend payout to the non-taxable spouse of the head of a family firm occurred last year when Philip Green's Arcadia group paid £460m to companies controlled by trusts in which Tina Green, Philip's Monaco-resident wife, is the principal beneficiary. The cash extracted from the group far exceeded the profits made in the two years following the Greens' acquisition of the company in 2002 for around £850m. So will the high court's ruling land the captain of industry with a tax bill of 25 percent of the dividend (£115m)?

Two years ago the Revenue issued guidelines on when it would tax businessmen who divert income to their families in this way. "A good test of whether or not the legislation could apply," advises the Revenue, "is to consider... whether income is being paid simply because the recipient is your spouse or child or some other individual you might wish to benefit". The guidelines also indicate that disproportionately large returns (perhaps something like £460m on an investment



of £850m in two years?) point towards taxing the payment.

On these criteria the Greens' arrangements might have been caught, so can the entrepreneur expect some tricky questions from his local tax inspector when he files his next return? It looks like he thought of that one last year. The *Eye* has learnt that not long before the massive dividend payment Green had personal discussions with the Revenue's deputy chairman, Dave Hartnett.

Although confidentiality rules prevented HMRC discussing the talks with the *Eye*, the fact that the dividend was paid soon afterwards suggests that Green (above left) won't be coughing up £115m tax any time soon. The Revenue also declined to say why the multi-billionaire gained such privileged access or how the department's top brass decide who they will see, commenting only that the "decision depends on the circumstances in any individual case".

HMRC's code on advising taxpayers states that "we will not help with tax planning"; and if Joe Public were looking to pay some money to his wife's offshore companies he could expect very short shrift from the taxman. The rich and powerful by contrast seem to be welcome in the Revenue's boardroom, which may go some way to explaining why it's rarely their tax affairs that end up being picked over in the high court.

What a Carayol

SIR Nicholas Montagu, Inland Revenue chairman until last year, really knew how to pick them. Not only did he choose a tax haven company to buy his department's tax offices, he also appointed a man who was soon to become a serious tax dodger to the board of the government's tax collection body.

In 2001 Montagu, eager to ditch what he saw as the Revenue's staid approach, found a



fashionable management guru to become a non-executive director. Rene Carayol (below left) ran his own "digital economy" consulting group called Voodoo and was author of *Corporate Voodoo*, one of the innumerable management guides in vogue at the time.

Once on the Revenue board Carayol's most conspicuous contribution to the Revenue was to write to the *Guardian* in 2002 after the paper's Nick Davies had criticised the department for being soft on corporate tax avoiders. Defending his new colleagues, Carayol claimed to have been "deeply impressed with the leadership of the organisation". He was duly rewarded with an OBE in the 2004 new year's honours list.

By last June, however, Carayol, now a big name on the "inspirational" speaking circuit, had little time for Revenue board meetings and resigned with the department's grateful thanks. Or at least that's how his departure was presented.

A slightly different picture has now emerged, with records seen by the *Eye* showing that the business guru was in a spot of trouble over his own tax affairs. Carayol incurred several penalties for filing his tax returns late and for not paying up on time while he was a Revenue director, culminating last month in a demand under the insolvency act that he finds £97,000 in overdue tax and penalties within 21 days before facing bankruptcy.

Quite why Carayol can't pay his dues is a mystery as his talents remain in great demand, not least for events funded by everybody who *does* pay their tax. He recently spoke to the "delivery priority leaders group", part of the prime minister's delivery unit, giving an "inspirational" performance according to the unit head Jenny Wright. And in October this year he will join a star-studded line-up including Bill Clinton and Mikhail Gorbachev at the "Leaders in London" conference.

Carayol writes a "leadership" magazine on his website, the theme of which for June was a typical piece of corporate gibberish: "delete the recent past". Perhaps he's hoping HMRC will apply the principle to his own tax arrears, although Carayol insisted – despite the evidence seen by the *Eye* – that he owes the Revenue absolutely nothing and it's all a huge mistake.



PRISON SUICIDE

Dead worrying

LAST MONTH a shameful record in British penal history was broken when 18 people killed themselves in UK jails and detention centres.

The youngest was 18 and the oldest 64. Seven of them were unconvicted and on remand. One was a woman; and one was an asylum-seeker whose only "offence" had been to seek refuge in this country. All but one of them hanged themselves.

The tally exceeds the unprecedented death rate in jails last year, which at its worst ran to 14 a month. Inquests into three of those deaths last week revealed a disturbing pattern of lack of suitable care for vulnerable and mentally ill inmates.

They included Emma Levey, a 24-year-old heroin addict with psychiatric problems. She had been hearing voices, suffering paranoia and self-harming for some weeks before she hanged herself in Downview prison. Her calls for psychiatric help went unheeded because the jail's regular psychiatrist had left three months earlier and had not been replaced. An inquest jury decided Emma killed herself while the balance of her mind was disturbed and because she had not received the treatment she needed.

Tina Bromley, who also suffered mental health problems, drug addiction and epilepsy, and who had a history of self-harm, hanged herself after being placed in solitary confinement, despite medical advice to the contrary. Last week an inquest jury in Bury, Suffolk, decided the 37-year-old single mother had not intended to kill herself, but that "it was probable that defects in the prison

system contributed to her death". She had just started a four-month sentence for drug possession and criminal damage and had been placed on an eight-day detox programme (the national standard is 21 days). On two days her anti-psychotic medication had also been withheld without explanation.

The third was Susan Stevens, 48, who had a long history of self-harm and who been on suicide watch for more than a year at Holloway. She managed to kill herself within days of arriving at Durham prison, and last week the Durham coroner, Andrew Tweddle, said he would be writing to the Prison Service to highlight shortcomings in her treatment: the second time in six months he felt compelled to write.

Only three months ago a high court judge ordered a public inquiry into a failed suicide attempt by a young remand prisoner in Pentonville, identified only as D. Only hours after he had twice tried to take his own life, he fashioned a noose from his bed sheet and hanged himself. By the time he was cut down he had suffered irreversible brain damage. Mr Justice Munby said the case raised "real and very worrying doubts" about whether there was sufficient protection for "at risk" prisoners.

But ministers seem determined to ignore such warnings – wherever they come from. Last December, even the parliamentary joint committee on human rights condemned our jails. Chair Jean Corston said: "These highly vulnerable people are being held within a structure that is glaringly ill-suited to meet even their basic needs."

ROYAL MAIL CHARGES

Post-it note

JUST as the likely closure of thousands of independent newsagents under office of fair trading (OFT) proposals will hit many people who buy magazines at the newsstand (see last *Eye*), postal subscribers also stand to be shafted by changes to delivery charges from the Royal Mail.

Under "pricing in proportion" the cost of delivering large (A4 and bigger) letters and magazines will be based principally on the size of the cover rather than, as it is now, the weight. Royal Mail reckons this more closely follows its own costs, though nobody else can quite understand why this should be the case.

Conveniently for the company, the effect will be to generate significant price increases for lighter items that require next day delivery (like, er, the *Eye*) and which are unlikely to attract much competition when the market opens up in January. On the other hand, delivery charges will fall for heavier magazines and catalogues whose delivery isn't so time-sensitive and which would be correspondingly more attractive to Royal Mail's competitors.

To make matters worse, and despite the complete absence of any interest in next-day magazine deliveries from other postal services companies, the regulator Postcomm has judged the prospects for competition for all bulk magazine delivery to be good and accordingly decided that no price controls are needed on this service.

Next year's initial price hike in postal charges for magazines like the *Eye* could be as much as 50 percent and significantly more for A3 publications. Neither competition nor regulation will prevent further escalation. The effect will be serious.

OIL RIG
SAFETY

Bravo, HSE

WHEN the *Eye* reported that the deaths of two workers on a Shell oil rig in 2003 had been preceded by complaints to the health and safety executive (HSE), which had taken "no serious action" (*Eye* 1132), the head of the executive's offshore group quickly wrote to explain that an extensive review had in fact been conducted and certain improvements recommended (*Eye* 1133).

The HSE official failed to mention, however, the safety regulator's other involvement with Shell around the same time. In spring 2003 the company implemented an "offshore business improvement project", the main aim of which was to enable one of the world's most profitable companies to save money. Trade unions representing rig workers complained about the project, largely because it involved the replacement of permanent rig-based maintenance crews with "flying squads" that would be cheaper but less familiar with each of the rigs, would not be immediately on hand and might even be unavailable in poor weather.

The result would be a worsening of the already woeful maintenance standards on Shell installations. The HSE itself identified a number of problems, including poor information given to the flying squads, excessive working hours and evidence of an increase in outstanding maintenance; and made

GMC

It won't whitewash

IT IS not just the *Eye* which believes the General Medical Council whitewashed the case of Dr Camille de San Lazaro, the paediatrician castigated for her damning role in the case of Dawn Reed and Christopher Lillie, two Newcastle nursery workers who were falsely accused of child abuse (*Eye* 1133).

The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE), whose job is to protect the "interests of the public and patients", is going to the high court to challenge the GMC's decision to let Dr de San Lazaro off because she was overworked and under pressure. The CHRE has the power to refer to a high court judge any decision by the GMC's fitness to practise panel it considers unduly lenient.

Although Reed and Lillie were eventually cleared of the charges in court, they were forced into hiding and their lives were ruined by continuing allegations in newspapers and a report by Newcastle city council. It was only after they had won a huge libel victory in 2002 that they could start rebuilding their lives. The consequences of the case were equally devastating for the families involved.

In the libel case, Mr Justice Eady was clear where he thought much of the blame lay. He said

Hearsay, no say

THE GMC formally abandoned its disciplinary hearing last week against Dr Chai Patel (pictured), Labour party donor and adviser and head of the Priory chain of rehab clinics. The doctor and his good friend Tony Blair must be relieved.

Those who have followed Dr Patel's brilliant career will know that the government sought his advice on care of the elderly and health modernisation at a time when he was running Westminster Health Care, a chain of nursing and old people's homes.

In what had been seen as a test case of a doctor's duty to people who are not his or her direct patients, Dr Patel had been charged with neglect of patients at Lynde House, a care home in Twickenham, south-west London where frail elderly patients suffered a

nine recommendations for improvements. But, despite all this and the executive's long record of interventions against Shell, on 18 August 2003 the HSE gave told the company that "these changes do not present any imminent risks to the health and safety of those persons working on your offshore installations". Three weeks later two men on Brent Bravo were killed when they inhaled gas following a massive leak caused, in the words of the sheriff imposing a £900,000 fine on Shell, by "a catalogue of failures".

The *Eye* has now seen internal company records showing just how bad maintenance was on Shell's rigs in the Brent field, with backlogs running into years for some jobs. One crucial task that was already several months overdue when the unions made their complaints was a "technowrap" survey, the process of checking that temporary patches over leaky gas pipes are effective. While it's not known precisely what caused the fatal leak, failures of these patches would lead to the kind of gas escape that killed the two men.

Against the background of Shell's obvious failure to keep its rigs safe, the unions believe that the company's cost-cutting measures must have presented an "imminent danger". The *Eye* put this to the HSE, whose spokesman replied that "HSE believed after its extensive investigation into the unions' complaints that... these risks were being adequately managed by Shell and that its platforms were safe, so far as reasonably practicable, for continued operation".

The unions are calling for the procurator fiscal (the Scottish crown prosecutor) to reconsider its decision not to conduct a fatal accident inquiry, which they say should examine the role of the HSE in the tragedy.

Dr de San Lazaro "threw objectivity and scientific rigour to the winds in a highly emotional misrepresentation of the facts". At one stage, in a letter to the criminal injuries compensation board, she set out a whole series of speculative thoughts but failed to mention the one crucial thing that was actually within her expertise as a paediatrician: negative physical findings of abuse. The judge said: "Mercifully, I can assume that Dr de San Lazaro is very much the exception among senior paediatricians."

Nor was Eady the only senior judge to criticise her. Quashing the conviction of a man wrongly accused of raping a young boy, Lord Justice Kennedy said that Dr de San Lazaro, who had given prosecution evidence, had been completely discredited.

The doctor admitted that she had exaggerated and overstated her findings in the Reed and Lillie case, that there were deficiencies and inaccuracies in her reports and that her police witness statements differed from original medical records. Even though the GMC panel found that her actions were inappropriate in relation to seven of the children, irresponsible in relation to six and unprofessional in relation to five, it still decided that this did not amount to "serious professional misconduct".

series of indignities including neglect, preventable falls and unexplained bruising (see *Eyes passim*).

These sorry tales were chronicled in the *Eye* and were confirmed two years ago in a damning report by independent inspector Mary Maclaren, which formed the basis of the case against Dr Patel. The report was ruled inadmissible, however, on the grounds that it was hearsay. The GMC decided there was therefore no case to answer – much to the regret of patients' families and friends who were keen to give evidence.

PS: Just before the report was published, Patel sold Westminster Health Care, including Lynde House, for £288m. But his company receives an estimated £60m a year in taxpayers' money for people who would previously have been NHS patients.



MULTINATIONALS

Rosy Brown

ONE of the government's priorities for its EU presidency is to sort out the taxation of multinationals to counter the regular expensive defeats for member states' tax laws in the European court of justice (ECJ).

Chancellor Gordon Brown is keen to ensure that the international rules allow countries to set their own tax laws. But any change at the European level will take years to achieve and won't help with the ongoing legal challenges to current and past British tax laws, estimated by some experts to be likely to present the treasury with bills for tens of billions of pounds in the next few years.

When Gordon appeared before the treasury select committee to discuss his most recent budget, Tory MP and accountant David Heathcoat-Amory asked if Gordon had allowed for these costs in his rosy budget "red book" projections. "We are advised that very, very large sums of money are potentially at stake here," he said. "Do you take that into account in your projections for next year's revenue which are due to rise, according to your budget documents, by over 8 percent?"

Brown had no hesitation in reassuring the committee: "Yes, we take all things into account." But the *Eye* has searched the budget red book in vain for recognition of the likely payouts and so asked how the chancellor's figures took these costs into account. The treasury eventually replied that "the forecasts do not explicitly factor in possible future revenue effects from any future decisions at the ECJ" as they "could not be quantified with reasonable accuracy given that the ECJ has yet to make the decisions".

So, contrary to Gordon's assurance to parliament, the billions that will be shelled out if the government loses the cases heading to the ECJ are not recognised in his optimistic economic forecasts. And as 98 percent of tax cases considered by the court in the last 10 years have ended in defeat for the national government, the judges in Luxembourg are unlikely to let the chancellor off the hook.

How big is the hole in Gordon's figures? The *Eye* asked HM Revenue & Customs for its estimates of the amounts at stake. Four weeks later officials replied that they would need another month to consider whether letting the public know the likely size of the dent in the public finances would be, er, in the public interest.

AIRPORTS

Runaway runway

AFTER paying millions of pounds in public subsidy, the Scottish executive is to fork out millions more to buy back Inverness Airport, terminating a truly stupid PFI deal.

Taxpayers will foot the £25m bill to renationalise the airport which cost investor Noble Group just £9.6m to build. Another private company, Infrastructure Investors (I2), a partnership between Barclays Private Equity and Société Générale, bought the contract from Noble last year.

The publicly-owned and heavily subsidised Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL) has nine more airfields serving the furthest flung parts of Scotland, but in 1998 the Inverness terminal needed replacing and a PFI contract was devised to pay for it.

As reported in *Eye* 1113, HIAL had to cough up £3.50 to the owner for every passenger flying from the airport – totalling nearly £2m last year and £8.5m over the life of the contract so far. As passenger numbers went up (from 337,000 in 1998 to 700,000 this year) the bill soared. Over a 25-year contract, the terminal's owner would have trousered a very tidy profit indeed. Still, the £25m compensation for halting the deal should be some comfort.

PS: The chairman of I2 is Adrian Montague, former chair of the treasury's PFI Taskforce which signed off on the terminal project in the first place.



In the City

SOME much-needed light may be about to be shed into the circumstances surrounding the death of Abbey National executive Richard Chang and the anonymous letter containing allegations of favouritism and/or corruption regarding IT consultancy contracts sent to the then Abbey chief executive Luqman Arnold shortly before Mr Chang's death a year ago next week.

The inquest into Chang's death is due to open on 18 July. The hearing is scheduled to last three to five days. Chang, an Abbey business analyst, fell to his death at the company's London headquarters less than an hour after requesting a break when being interviewed by two operatives of corporate investigators Kroll Associates, hired by Abbey to discover the author of the detailed letter.

The sensitivity surrounding the inquest can be judged by the number of parties expected to be legally represented. These include not just the Chang family and Abbey (since taken over by Spanish banking giant Banco Santander) but also Kroll and Chang's inquisitors, former Scotland Yard chief superintendent Howard Jones and the then deputy head of investigations at Kroll, Peter Pender-Cudlip.

Evidence is expected to be given that Chang, 48, jumped from the fifth floor balcony of the Abbey atrium. He is understood to have left a note addressed to Jones, the main interviewer, admitting that he had written the letter, stating that no one else was involved and asking that his family be looked after. During the interview Chang is said to have denied that he had been responsible or declined to answer questions.

One question the inquest may consider is why Chang – leaving Abbey for a new job, about to go on holiday, with no apparent mental or medical problems and with a wife and two young children – should decide to commit suicide and, if he did, whether he did so after the balance of his mind was disturbed by the Kroll interview.

Key to answering that question is likely to be the interview tape which was apparently secretly recorded. Questions are expected to be asked about whether any undue pressure was put on Chang during the interview. Kroll insists the interview was conducted in a normal manner. But what is normal for police and corporate investigators may be anything but for the person on the receiving end. So, the tenor and nature of the questioning is certain to become an issue.

Normal techniques in such interviews designed to obtain a confession are to press the subject with

the weight of evidence implicating him and to stress the consequences of failing to confess and of being proved guilty for himself, his family, their reputation and his future job/financial prospects. For some put under such pressure, the experience could be traumatic. Whether sufficient to provoke suicide is a question for the Chang inquest.

So, say the family, are the events leading up to the interview. Chang's family believe that he was effectively "ambushed" – called into the office from his holiday for a meeting under a false pretext. He was also not accompanied by a lawyer or friend which is the normal procedure for any internal investigation. Whether Chang was given the opportunity to be accompanied or to postpone the interview, like the issue of his agreement to the recording, are important questions for both the Kroll operatives and their client Abbey, along with how Chang was invited to attend the meeting.

Not only was Chang not accompanied by a representative, but Abbey did not have anyone from its human resources department present during the interview either. There may well be questions to be asked as to whether the interview followed Abbey's own internal procedures and whether the apparent "set-up" of Chang may not have increased the pressure felt by the analyst.

These questions could go to any issue of responsibility or contributory liability for Richard Chang's death and explain why not just Abbey and Kroll but also the two interviewers have been separately advised. Any issue of blame for Chang's death during and after the

inquest could create a conflict of interest and affect any financial liability.

Although the inquest is likely to focus on the events of 13 July, it is also likely the Chang family will press for information about events leading up to the interview and the contents of the anonymous letter. Chang was one of several suspects identified by the Kroll investigation. He was the first to be interviewed as the prime suspect. Another interviewee was his manager, Vincent Santeng, who has since left Abbey. He is expected to be a witness.

Abbey had made it clear it intended to take severe action against whoever was found responsible for the letter. Abbey carried out an internal investigation into the allegations in the letter and, like so many internal investigations, found nothing wrong. It did not ask Kroll to investigate the allegations – something that has surprised many experienced in such investigations.

For the Chang family the inquest has to explain why a man who had seemingly everything to live for should decide to kill himself within less than an hour of leaving an interview by investigators hired by his soon to be ex-employer.



"Having found a reliable dealer, procure a dozen pristine £20 notes and set aside a corresponding number of compact mirrors..."

THE decision by German drugs group Merck to pay £12m to settle civil claims by the NHS of over-charging and price-fixing is certain to increase pressures on the other targets of the parallel Serious Fraud Office criminal investigation.

This payment follows an earlier £4.5m settlement by the Indian group Ranbaxy Laboratories. A domino effect could now gather pace among the other four main civil defendants who are also SFO targets: the US group Ivax; the listed Goldshield; and the privately-owned Kent Pharmaceuticals and Regent-GM Laboratories. The reason? Time is running out if they want to cut a deal before the SFO is expected to bring charges against the companies and some of their directors in October. Those companies who settle, like Merck and Ranbaxy, could well avoid being charged.

Directors from all six companies have now been interviewed under caution by the SFO and are on police bail until October. Some further interviews may take place in coming months. However, it is expected that the SFO will bring charges either in October or soon thereafter. The directors are expected to be charged with conspiracy to defraud regarding the alleged price-fixing cartel in generic, penicillin-based antibiotics and warfarin.

Merck, which had been looking to settle for some time, and Ranbaxy have paid without admission of wrongdoing.

The decision to settle was made easier for Merck by the fact that certain key executives in its Generics subsidiary were no longer employed. The same applies with Ivax and its Norton Healthcare offshoot. For the larger multinationals the issue is often simply a commercial one: how much does it cost to make this problem go away?

The issue for Goldshield and Kent is more difficult. Goldshield CEO Ajit Patel and his number two Kirti Patel are in the SFO frame. So too is Kent chairman Denis O'Neill. It is very difficult in their circumstances to see how the company can separate themselves from their directors unless a settlement is followed by a guilty plea. Here the tactic may be to fight the legality of any charges on the basis that at the time the cartel was supposed to be operating – 1996 to 2000 – price-fixing was not a crime in Britain. That could delay the decision over what to do at any trial until 2006 or even 2007.

THE problems posed for Royal Bank of Scotland as a result of its involvement in the Enron collapse and in particular the legal battle over the extradition of the former NatWest bankers accused of defrauding the bank of \$7.3m has been ratcheted up as a result of RBS's decision last month to make an £11m settlement with Enron and the \$2.2bn settlement agreed by JP Morgan Chase with Enron shareholders. The JP Morgan settlement followed a previous \$2bn settlement agreed by Citigroup.

RBS announced that, although settling with Enron, it will continue to fight the shareholders' action and other claims. However, that may merely be a negotiating ploy while discussions go on about how much RBS is prepared to pay and

THE DIRECTORS

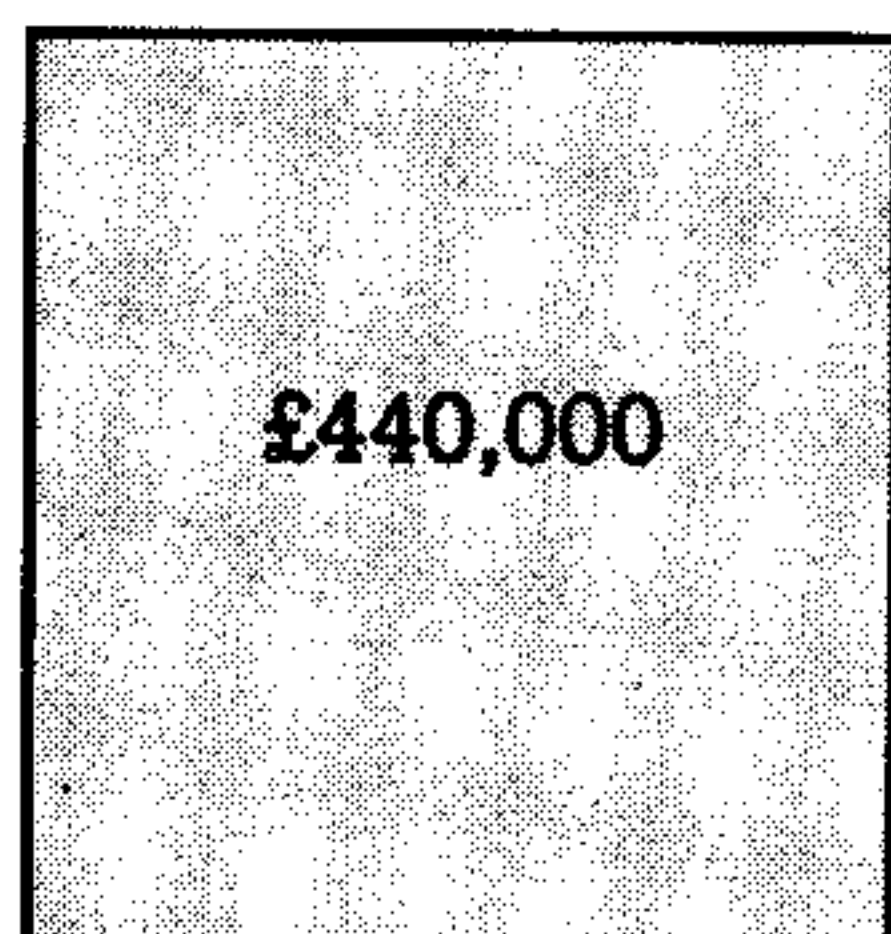


DREDGE & RIGG

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

Avis... hurts



Daily losses of
Avis Europe
shareholders over
the last five years



Daily cost of
renting a
Rolls-Royce
Silver Spirit

the shareholders accept.

But the settlement will increase the focus on why it has so far failed to take any civil action against those fans of Enron, the Greenwich NatWest bankers David Bermingham, Giles Darby and Gary Mulgrew, if NatWest is – as American prosecutors allege – a victim of their fraud in arranging for the under-valued sale of an Enron-linked investment to an offshore partnership in which they had a 50 percent stake.

As discussed in the last *Eye*, the NatWest Three are pressing the SFO to prosecute them as an alternative to extradition. The SFO has politely declined. That decision and the extradition are expected to run all the way to the House of Lords and the European court of human rights.

If RBS does not sue its former employees, who deny any wrongdoing, how can it be a victim? The bank has maintained as recently as May that it is still “not yet aware of all the facts and evidence” regarding the 2000 deal, despite the three bankers being indicted three years ago. It says that it is reserving its rights while monitoring the criminal proceedings and will make a decision “in the light of the final outcome”.

Should the NatWest Three succeed in forcing an SFO investigation – a prosecution could be another matter – then RBS could be forced off that fence. Otherwise it would seem it intends to wait to see whether the NatWest Three are convicted or plead guilty, making defence of a civil action close to impossible. Hardly a principled action.

THERE has been considerable press excitement over yet another AIM-listed oil play, Equator Exploration, whose Canadian chief executive Wade Cherwayko was the subject of a gushing piece of *Sunday Telegraph* puffery in May. Equator has been very much part of the AIM oil bubble with the shares doubling so far this year to around 165p, giving the company a valuation approaching £200m before any oil is found. Equator has raised £60m from investors off the back of oil prospects offshore Nigeria and the West African island of Sao Tome.

Sadly the article and others like it had no space to mention the last time “Prince Wade”, West Africa, oil and the stock market came together. That was in Canada back in the mid-90s with Abacan Resources. By 1997 Abacan was valued at more than Can\$1.5bn on the promise of its drilling in the Niger delta. The shares, once Can\$15, were below Can\$1 in February 1998 when Cherwayko resigned. The shares had collapsed in 1997 when Abacan had to admit its Niger delta oil field was nothing like as promising as had been forecast and pulled a planned financing. The shares, already down to \$5, fell more than 60 percent in a day.

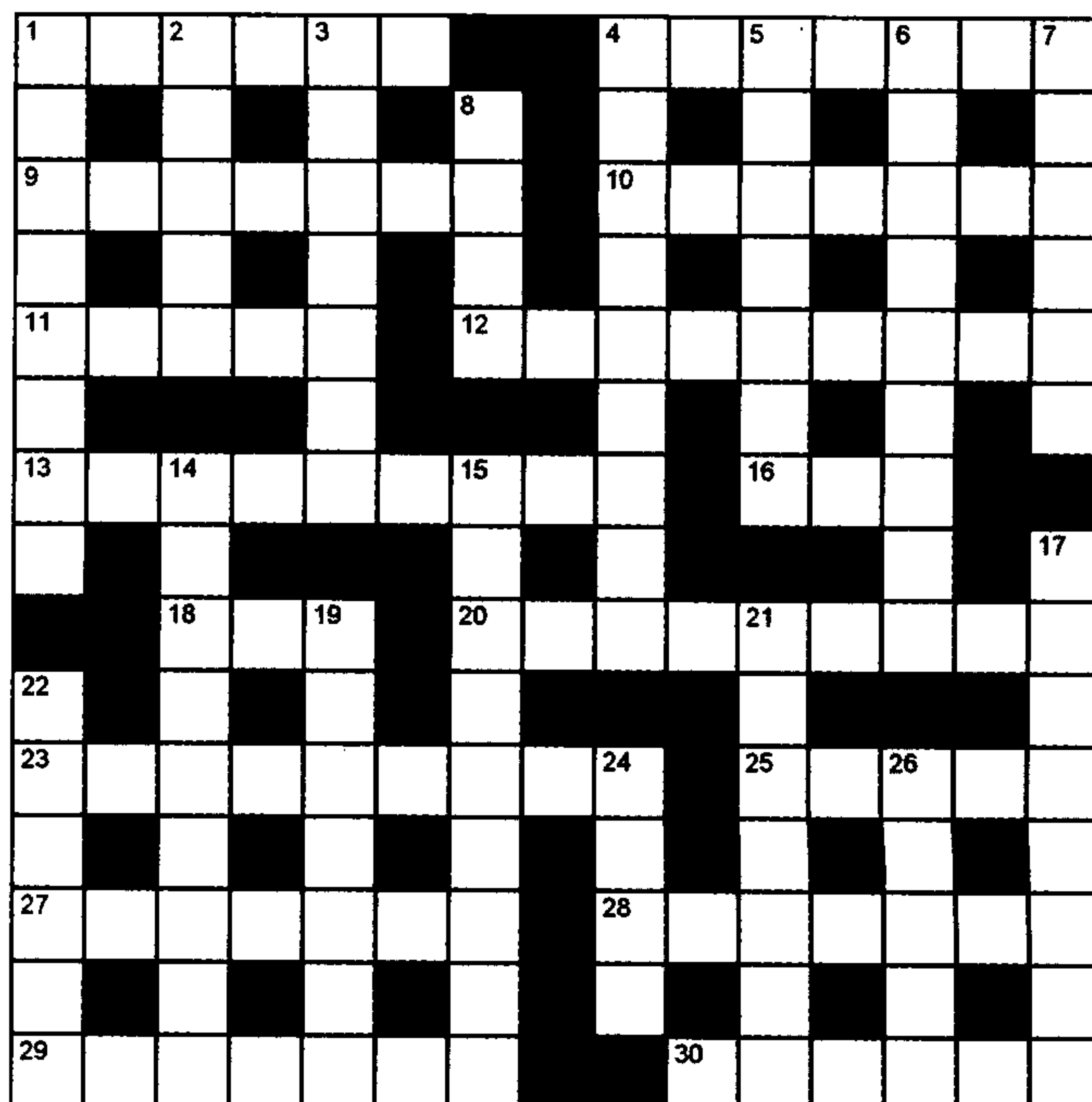
Equator investors must hope that they do not share the Abacan experience. So too must former Tory overseas development minister Baroness Lynda Chalker who last month joined the company as a non-executive director and adviser.

'Slicker'

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ACROSS

- 1 Skirt off ... getting hard inside racy venue (6)
- 4 Decide one day to get a beak (7)
- 9/10/4dn. Keeping up a pretence as NHS employees of engaging in precocious sex? (7,7,3,6)
- 11 It's the end of shirt – if he gets excited – lifter (5)
- 12 Healthy tip to knob – with fancy tie, it's a good length for a politician wanting media coverage (9)
- 13 Mugs up inside wrinklies' resort? (4-5)
- 16/25 Peasant who demanded what almost sounds just the magazine for the bathroom DIY-er? (3,5)
- 18 Good to shaft twice-married film producer (3)
- 20 Balls up as a leader: newly minted sovereign has Murdoch's head replacing Elizabeth's (9)
- 23 Made to gasp at Dr Glen's bust (9)
- 25 See 16ac.
- 27 Sort out booze – it'll get the speaker high (7)
- 28 Stone has to get tumescent for loud-mouth TV presenter (4,3)
- 29 Tell me if I should stop tipping the bottle and mend ways (women only) (3,4)
- 30 Crown put on Camilla finally? Run! (6)

DOWN

- 1 Official bits of advice bearing on Ron Davies, jocularly – “getting end away” (8)
- 2 Terrorists question one countryman Bush claimed to have set free (5)
- 3 More than enough booze – Kennedy's first in (“wicked!”) (7)
- 4 See 9 Across
- 5 Getting the bird, government minister loses way, right? Needs to rope in head of Department (7)
- 6 Hardly work up a sweat clasping hole of Eliza (9)
- 7 Festival scoffer's “F-off” (6)
- 8 See 24dn.
- 14 Not wishing to be shot, Chuck's after a snappy item (6-3)
- 15 Many a film rubbishes what a “resigning” politician claims he wants to be more of? (6,3)
- 17 Lack of desire to be a consumer offers one alternative to interest in chopper's erection (8)
- 19 Brenda: one always ready for a flutter? (7)
- 21 Time when bloody group at court raised personal stink over Brenda (7)
- 22 God smite ‘Two egos’ Ross! (6)
- 24/8 Sun not being out, takes Times – not renowned for cultural advancement! (4,4)
- 26 Arty-farty Brian's almost up in town (5)

Crossword 290 winner: JOHN TOWNSEND

ACROSS: 9 Happy hour 10 Styli 11 Throb 12 Bugger off 13 Minelli 15 Chimera 17 Pissing yourself 19 Decagon 21 Detests 23 Lily-white 25 Towel 27 Necks 28 Elton John.

DOWN: 1 Rhythm 2 Spur 3 Eyeballing 4 Lobbying 5 Tragic 6 Isle 7 Eye-openers 8 Riff-raff 14 No such luck 16 Irritating 17 Piddling 18 Oddments 20 Nailed 22 So long 24 Wasp 26 Wool.



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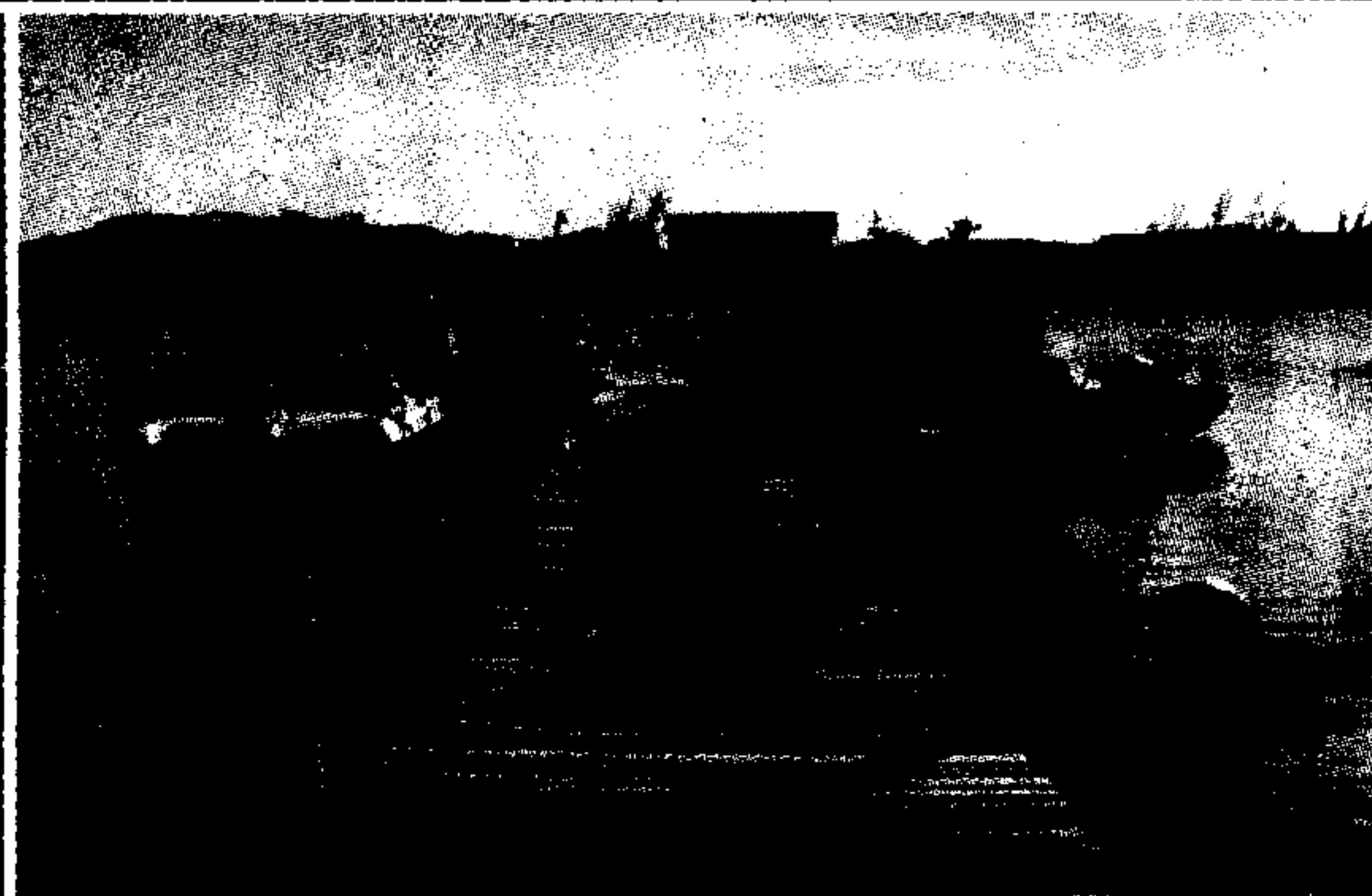
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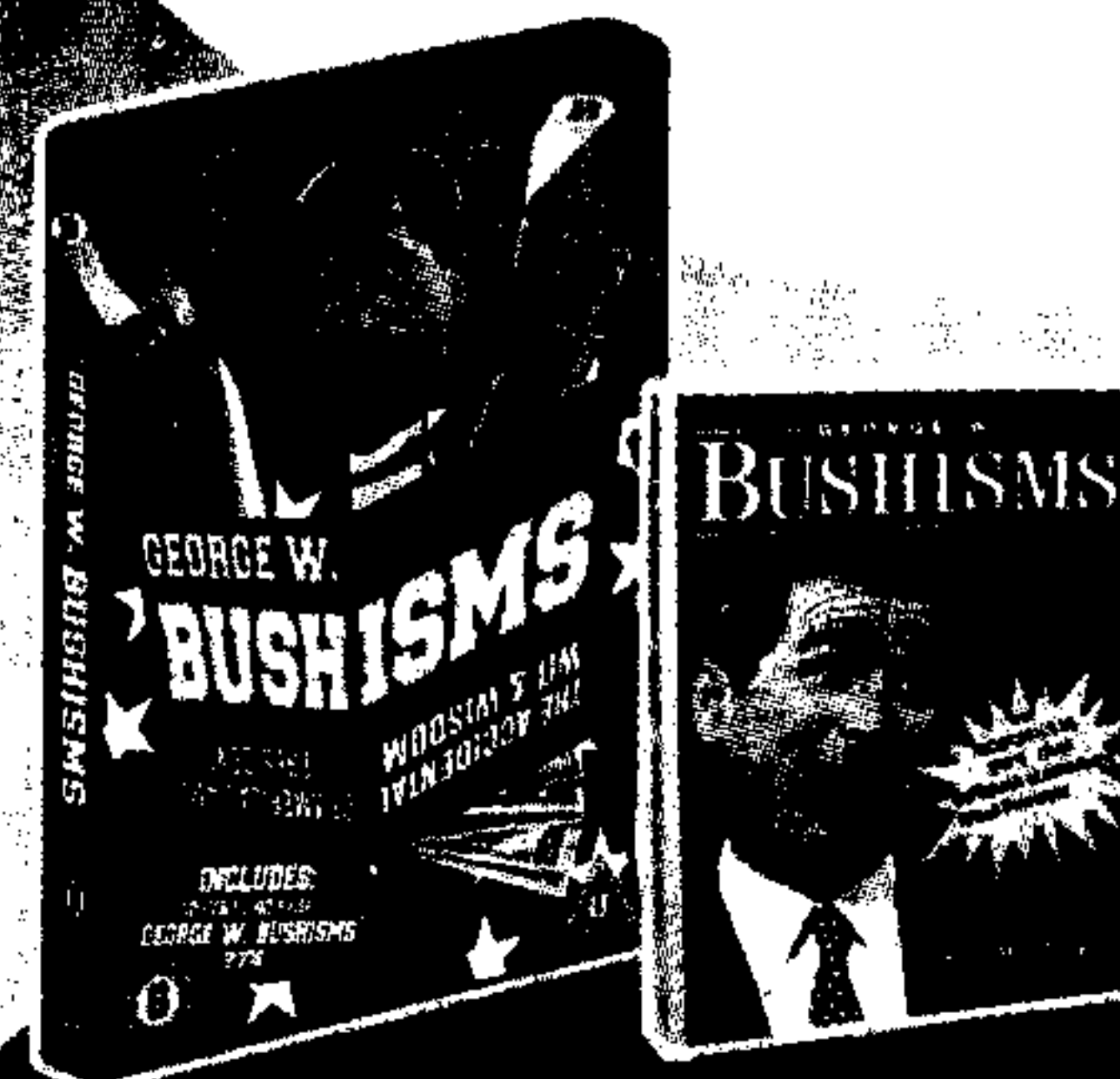
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The British clothing chain store has a lot to fear from **Mr. Raja M Daswani** of Kowloon. If there were a global ambassador for men's suiting, Mr Daswani, who owns and runs Hong Kong's biggest tailoring business, would be that man. He and his family team measure and make hundreds of suits a week for discerning clients across the world.

Indeed, so successful is **Mr. Daswani**, that - a little unnervingly as he is measuring you up - he freely admits he doesn't really need to work any more: 'My team is as experienced as I am. But I just love men's suits and I wouldn't feel right sitting at home. It's not a business. It's a mission.'

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finished suit in a British cloth, with every refinement from handmade button holes to knee lining. Even the most expensive suit, made in deluxe superfine wool for £1,500 (£1,950 including tax and duty), costs a third less than it would on Savile Row.

Raja Daswani may be based in Hong Kong, but his sartorial mission to the badly dressed and overpaying British customer brings him to the UK as often as once a month. He and his team take over hotel suites in major cities, so British customers can make an appointment and get the full Kowloon Monty. Measurements and digital photos are taken here and emailed to Hong Kong. Often, your suit will be started on by a tailor 6,000 miles away before you've even left the hotel. You can have it couriered within a week or so, or wait for a second fitting when the Raja team hits your town again a few weeks later.

It now remains to see whether the Raja revolution, with its inspired mix of artistic flair, entrepreneurial genius and digital technology, will see the end of the off-the-peg British chain store suit. On price alone, it's a sartorial solution that will even please the Suits in accounts.

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117 NOT OUT. Walter Sickert, William Gull, John Netley. 'Howwzzatt!'

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BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS: Help to raise funds. All donations welcome. Nationwide, S/C: 07-00-30. A/C: 85898101.

SINGLE MUM relocating to West Country. Any assistance most gratefully received. Halifax, S/C: 11-16-26. A/C: 14784081.

SEND NO MONEY. Please link to us: www.berkswelldirect.com New start-up.

FINANCIAL AID NEEDED to help me extricate myself from bad situation. NatWest, A/C: 61808865. S/C: 60-03-36. Thank you.

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS (writer) needs rescue and care by knight in shining armour (patron). Contact: adiamondchick@gmail.com

PLEASE HELP a hard-working female with a great business idea who needs £40K to achieve her goal. Many thanks. Halifax, S/C: 11-12-31. A/C: 00035982.

YOUR MONEY NEEDED to get my 7-inch black stilettos off the ground. HSBC, S/C: 40-33-33. A/C: 31709011.

GENUINE CRY FOR HELP: Breast cancer has left me desperately in need. Debt of £25,000 - any help or deposit would be received with gratitude. S/C: 09-01-26. A/C: 44082223.

SEASONED MAGAZINE PUBLISHER with hot idea seeks angel with business nous / energy to turn one-man-band into thriving company. mugwump@mknow.co.uk

NOT WAVING, BUT DROWNING. Lifeguard needed. Thank you. S/C: 30-00-45. A/C: 82810072.

£18K DEBT: Help me stay in dream but low-paid job. Co-operative Bank, S/C: 08-92-49. A/C: 02022840.

WIDOW HAS LOST JOB due to poor health and now risks losing home due to rising debts. Any help appreciated. NatWest, S/C: 56-00-46. A/C: 58793984.

GENUINE GOOD GUY with mounting debt seeks help restarting finances. Any help greatly appreciated. S/C: 80-05-80. A/C: 00349829.

HOPELESSLY IN DEBT. Any help appreciated. A/C: H250459WIL. S/C: 09-00-00.

SEVERELY DYSLEXIC BOY needs funding for specialist school. Any help appreciated. Reply Box 135391.

CANCER VICTIM, £14K DEBT. Please help. HSBC, S/C: 40-30-33. A/C: 91207008.

DROWNING IN DEBT. Life crumbling, please help. Lloyds TSB, S/C: 87-79-14. A/C: 81628660.

NOW WISER YOUNG FOOL requires good accounts advice and/or generous donations to escape bankruptcy from £36,000 debts. S/C: 20-36-98. A/C: 40472794.

IDEALIST STUDENT DELEGATION to Israel / Palestine: 16 itinerant youngsters wishing to understand complexity of identity and initiate exchange programme. Desperate for donations. RBS, S/C: 162317. A/C: 10071383. Many thanks. fcs@luu.leeds.ac.uk

CATHOLIC PRIEST needs holiday. God bless. S/C: 40-46-04. A/C: 51317679.

NEW WRITER, doesn't like publishers, needs £2,000 to self publish. Reply Box 135618.

EVEN TURKEYS need to soar like eagles. Help me start a new life. £35K needed to realise my dream. S/C: 30-95-24. A/C: 07067195.

LADY PAYING £30 MONTHLY from pension credit on old tax account £3740, will die before paid, grateful if burden lifted. Halifax, S/C: 11-01-31. A/C: 00270723.

FINANCE NEEDED to start bicycle refurbishment business. All donations gratefully received. Reply Box 135867.

SALUKI OWNER drowning in £10K of debt after redundancy from animal charity. Any help deeply appreciated. Co-op Bank, S/C: 08-92-49. A/C: 02083766.

£2600 NEEDED for Mind Cuba Trek. stempelatto@aol.com Thank you.

WORSHIPPERS OF BEAUTY! Deity of aesthetic delight requires suitable attire! 40K needed before the season ends! aesthetic_delight@hotmail.com SC: 56-00-17. AC: 43274749.

PERFORMER NEEDS £10K for a BA Honours course in musical theatre. Tel: 07849 182 301.

SAVED £1200, need £1,000 more for my husband's dream 40th birthday trip. Thank you! Lloyds TSB, S/C: 30-95-75. A/C: 07457106.

PLEASE HELP ME, badly in debt widow who cares for brain-damaged son. Lloyds TSB, S/C: 30-97-06. A/C: 01199462.

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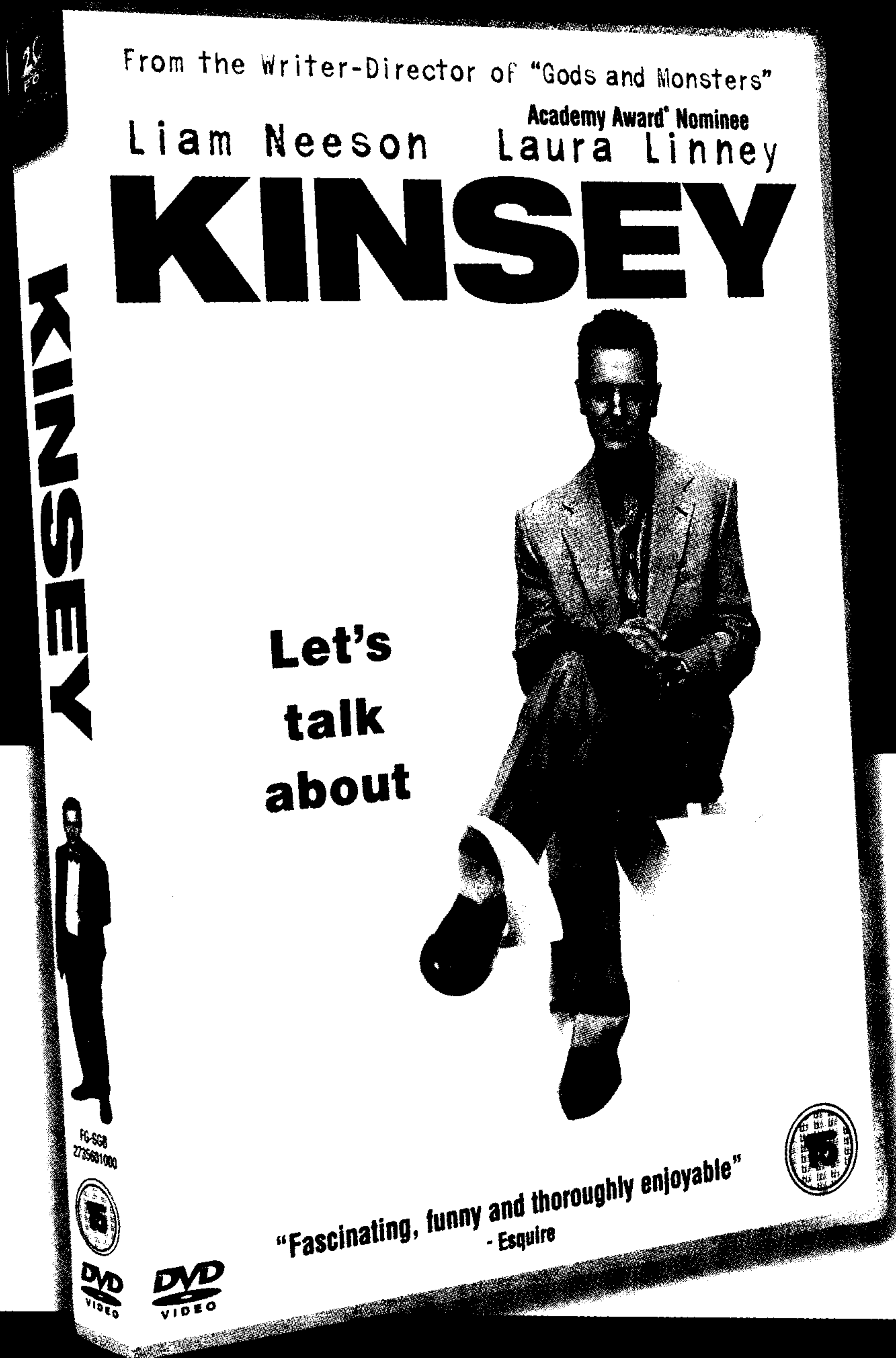
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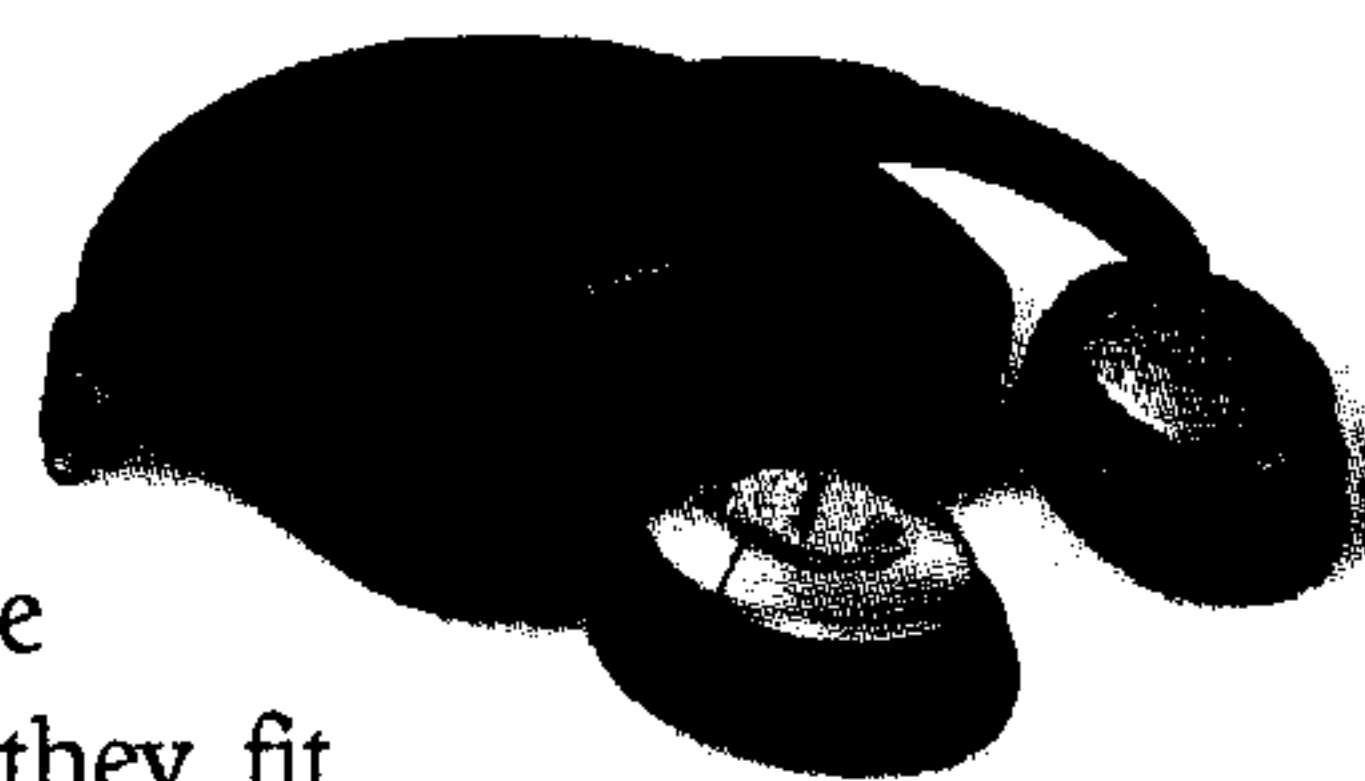


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